



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

Georgia's Pre-K Program 2016-2017 School Year Pre-K Providers' Operating Guidelines

The Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning 2016-2017 School Year Pre-K Providers' Operating Guidelines are effective July 1, 2016. Key program components are listed in the Table of Contents for easy reference.

This document outlines the requirements and regulations for operating a Georgia's Pre-K Program. To ensure program compliance and quality service, all Pre-K providers must be familiar with and implement these guidelines. This document is intended to provide clarity and to offer guidance to current and new Pre-K providers.

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Georgia's Pre-K Program 2016-2017 Operation and Services

1.0 General Program Operations and Services Information

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of Georgia's Pre-K Program is to provide a minimum of 180 full days (6.5 hours of instructional services per day; 1170 total hours per year) of high quality educational/instructional services to eligible four-year-old children.

1.2 Dates of Service

The 2016-2017 school year for Georgia's Pre-K Program will operate within the dates stated in the grant agreement.

1.3 Days of Service

The required days of service for the 2016-2017 school year is 190 days, which includes 180 instructional days for students and 10 days of Pre-K professional development/ planning days (pre- and post-planning, staff development, Pre-K training, in-service days) for staff. Pre-K staff cannot be used to provide services unrelated to Pre-K during the 190 day school year during the day.

Each program is required to submit a calendar into the PANDA system for approval. The Pre-K program calendar must document 180 days of student instructional days or the equivalent instructional hours (1170 hours). If a program is unable to provide the required instructional time, then the provider's Pre-K payment will be prorated based on the number of instructional days provided. In addition to the student instructional days, programs must document the additional 10 professional development/planning days. Any concerns or issues regarding meeting the required days of service should be referred to the program's regional Pre-K Consultant for resolution.

Programs without approved plans for providing the required instructional and planning time could be in jeopardy of losing funding.

2.0 Child/Family Eligibility

2.1 Age Requirement

Children must be four years of age on September 1, 2016, based on acceptable documentation, such as birth certificates, certificates of live birth, passports, official medical documents, legal documents, or official documents from other countries. Only children whose birthdates are from September 2, 2011, through September 1, 2012, are eligible for participation in the 2016-2017 school year. **Proof of age eligibility must be on file the day the child begins the Pre-K program.** Payments to Pre-K providers will be reduced for children without age documentation on file the first day of school.

Children who are five years of age on September 1, 2016, and have not attended Georgia's Pre-K Program as four-year-olds, may enroll in the Pre-K program. Parents and teachers are encouraged to consider the

child's date of birth, physical maturity, emotional maturity, and prior experiences when making the decision to enroll the child in the Pre-K program at age four or age five.

If a child enrolls as a four-year-old, and the family elects to withdraw the child within the child's first 30 days of enrollment, the family may withdraw the child, and the child may be eligible to enroll in Pre-K the following year if the local enrollment policies allow.

If a child is not served as a four year old, then the child may be eligible to attend the Pre-K Program as a five year old. However, programs may choose to deny enrollment into their Pre-K program children who are age eligible for kindergarten. Parents should check the enrollment policies of local programs before enrolling their child. If enrolled, parents of children who are five years of age on September 1, 2016, and age eligible for kindergarten will be asked to sign a **Parent Acknowledgement Form (Appendix A)** indicating that the child did not previously attend Georgia's Pre-K Program for longer than 30 days.

Children who are six years of age on September 1, 2016, and are age-eligible for first grade are not eligible for enrollment in Georgia's Pre-K Program.

2.2 Requests for Children to Repeat Pre-K

Bright from the Start will review requests for children to repeat Pre-K on a case-by-case basis. All such requests should be submitted in writing from the Pre-K Project Director and should include the following:

- Letter from the project director/principal stating reason(s) the student would be better served in Pre-K than in kindergarten
- Letter from the parents/guardians requesting that their child repeat Pre-K
- Documentation to support the request to repeat Pre-K
 - Work Sampling Online (WSO) information:
 - Developmental Checklist
 - Narrative Summary
 - Teacher's recommendation, and/or doctor's recommendation
 - Interventions during the Pre-K program year
 - Special education referrals, evaluations conducted, etc.

All requests to repeat Pre-K including supporting documentation must be received by Bright from the Start by April 14, 2017. Requests received after this date will not be considered.

E-mail requests to: PreKInclusion@dec.al.ga.gov and include **Request for Retention** in the subject line of the email.

2.3 Residency Requirement

The child must be a Georgia resident. For purposes of this program, Georgia resident is defined as a child who resides in the state of Georgia. **Proof of residency should be part of a child's on-site file prior to or on the first day of Pre-K.** When documenting residency, Pre-K providers should refer to the policy of the local school system regarding appropriate documentation. Examples of proof of residency include the following: current lease, property tax notice, homeowner's insurance bill, mortgage statement, current vehicle registration form, letter from shelter, letter from employer if employer provides housing, any utility bill listing the residence as the service address, and current PeachCare eligibility documents for the child. A cell phone bill or a driver's license is not an acceptable proof of residency. If a student's family is living with someone else, parents should provide a notarized affidavit from the property owner stating where the child's family is residing, plus a copy of the property owner's proof of residency (any items listed above).

Active duty military families can support Georgia residency with a copy of official military orders verifying Georgia residency during the school year.

2.4 Parent Requirement

A parent must agree to send the child to the Pre-K program for 6.5 hours of instructional time for the full school year. A child who is chronically tardy or absent can be disenrolled from the program. A child who is not enrolled in the extended day program and is not picked up at the end of the Pre-K day on a regular basis can be disenrolled (See Section 3.9.)

2.5 Category One Definition

Category One child eligibility is defined as the child's and/or family's participation in one of the following: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), SSI (Supplemental Security Income), Medicaid, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), or Child and Parent Services (CAPS) program. Documentation of participation must be verified and kept on file for review. Children who participate in the free and reduced meal program through the school that they attend may also be eligible as Category One if income eligibility is verified on each child and kept on file for review.

2.6 Category Two Definition

Category Two children are those who do not meet the requirements for Category One eligibility.

3.0 Enrollment

3.1 Open Enrollment

Enrollment for the program must be open and nondiscriminatory. Children cannot be denied participation in educational programs on the basis of race, color, or national origin (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); sex (Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and Title II of the Vocational Education Amendments of 1976); or disability (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990).

Providers must develop comprehensive written enrollment policies to meet the needs of children and families in the community. The written enrollment policies should be kept on-site and made available to parents. The definition and implementation of such policies are determined by individual providers. Enrollment policies should address exactly how students are chosen for participation in the Pre-K Program, i.e. first-come, first-served, lottery drawing, procedures for enrollment of siblings/multiple births, etc. Procedures for how students are assigned to Pre-K classrooms should also be included in the written enrollment policies. Programs are encouraged to provide specific procedures regarding enrollment periods, attendance zones, placement of siblings in same or different classes, and other critical issues related to enrollment.

Providers cannot require the following as a condition of enrollment:

- Certificate of Immunization (Form 3231)
- Certificate of Vision, Hearing, Dental, and Nutrition Screening (Form 3300)
- Upfront payment of meal or extended day fees
- Participation in summer programs prior to starting Pre-K
- Verification of child's status related to Category One or extended day services
- Independent toileting skills (toilet trained)

3.2 Homeless Children

Bright from the Start recognizes that children and their families who experience homelessness deal with many challenges. Pre-K providers are encouraged to examine their existing enrollment policies to address homeless families seeking to enroll a child in Georgia's Pre-K Program. Providers choosing to give priority to eligible homeless children should clearly define this practice in their written enrollment policies. Providers should contact their Pre-K consultant if guidance is needed.

Homeless children are defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations. This also applies to those that have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; like cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.

3.3 Children in Foster Care

Pre-K providers are encouraged to examine their existing enrollment policies to address families seeking to enroll a child, who is in foster care, in Georgia's Pre-K Program. Providers choosing to give priority to eligible foster children should clearly define this practice in their written enrollment policies. Providers should contact their Pre-K Consultant if guidance is needed.

The Georgia Department of Human Services Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) is responsible for assuring that children are safe from abuse and neglect. When DFCS determines it is not safe for a child to remain in the home of his or her caregiver, the child is placed in foster care. Foster care is intended to be a temporary home away from home while the agency works with the child's family to eliminate or minimize the safety issues that caused agency involvement. DFCS's goal is to return children safely to their families as soon as possible, but only after the safety issues have been resolved.

3.4 Local School Attendance Zones

A child who resides within the local school system, but not within the attendance zone of the specific school providing the Pre-K program, may not be denied service but may be placed on a waiting list until all children who do reside within the attendance zone of the specific school are enrolled. A child who resides within another local school system's attendance zone may not be denied service but may be placed on a waiting list until all children who do reside within the district are enrolled. Families may be required to pay out-of-district fees depending on local board of education policies.

3.5 Child Registration Forms

Bright from the Start child registration forms must be used when registering a child for Georgia's Pre-K Program. Forms are available at www.dec.state.ga.us. There are two different forms available: one in English and one in Spanish. For private childcare providers, a Parental Agreement Form is also available for use, if needed. Providers should select the appropriate form(s) for their type of program. A parent or guardian must complete and sign a registration form for each child registering in the program. The complete child registration form must be filed in each child's file and kept on-site for review.

3.6 Student Social Security Numbers

Social security numbers are used to help identify students on rosters. Providers should request a copy of each enrolled student's social security card; however, parents cannot be required to submit the

information. If a parent chooses not to submit the social security card, providers should ask the parent to complete the **Student Social Security Number Information Form (Appendix B)**. If the provider has a similar form or SSN waiver, they may choose to use that form. A copy of each student's social security card or completed *Student Social Security Number Information Form* (or similar form) should be kept on-site for review by the Pre-K Consultant.

3.7 Waiting Lists

A waiting list shall be maintained at the site level for children that are not able to attend due to full enrollment. All families asking to be placed on the waiting list must complete all sections of the **Waiting List Information Form (Appendix C)**. *Waiting List Information Forms* must be kept on-site and available to Bright from the Start staff.

Entering waiting list information into PANDA is **mandatory**. Complete waiting list information must be reported with the first roster and updated each roster reporting period.

3.8 Category One and Category Two Designation After Enrollment

Children should not be identified as Category One or Category Two at the time of registration; however, the Pre-K provider is responsible for determining Category One or Category Two designation after enrollment. All families should complete the **Roster Information form (Appendix D)** which should be kept on site for review by the Pre-K Consultant. In addition, the provider should request appropriate documentation of Category One services (such as copies of cards with current dates, current statements, etc.) and maintain documentation in student files. Providers must report Category One designation on the roster after supporting documentation is received. Category One and Category Two designation should be updated each roster reporting period.

3.9 Procedures for Student Attendance

Pre-K providers should formulate written procedures for addressing issues regarding attendance and tardies. Daily attendance records must be maintained on site and include the dates when a child is absent and the dates/times when a child arrives late, leaves early or is picked up late. The attendance procedures should specify actions to be taken by the Pre-K provider if attendance issues become problematic. For instance, the procedures could require a phone call to parents after three unexcused absences or tardies; a letter to parents from the director after six absences or tardies; a parent conference after eight or nine absences; referral to the Pre-K Consultant after ten absences. The goal of the attendance policy is to assist families in establishing and maintaining regular school attendance patterns.

Chronic Attendance Issues

Chronic tardiness is defined as late arrival or early departure more than once per week. A policy of tardiness should be developed by the provider. Providers are encouraged to allow a five to ten minute drop off and pick up window outside of the 6.5 instructional day. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing more than two days per month without medical or her reasonable explanation. Chronic tardiness or absenteeism may also be defined by an established regular attendance pattern(s), e.g., if a child is late every Monday or absent every Tuesday or leaves early every Friday.

Providers are required to document efforts to assist parents/guardians of children who do not attend on a regular basis, are routinely late, or routinely leave the program early in improving attendance. A meeting with the parent/guardian should occur to determine the reason(s) for the problem and identify ways to resolve the problem. Inability to resolve the problem after documented interventions should be referred using the **Chronic Absenteeism or Tardiness Report (Appendix F)** for disenrollment consideration.

Requests should be submitted in writing to the program's Pre-K Consultant. **Providers may not disenroll a child without prior approval from Bright from the Start.**

Consecutive Absenteeism

Children who do not attend class for 10 consecutive days without a medical or other reasonable explanation **must** be removed from the roster. Bright from the Start approval is not needed; however, the program is responsible for reporting student end dates on the roster. The end date is defined as the last day the child physically attended the program.

A student whose parent or legal guardian is in military service in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard, and such parent or legal guardian has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted excused absences, up to a maximum of five additional school days per school year, for days missed from school to visit with his or her parent or legal guardian prior to the parent's or legal guardian's deployment or during the parent's or legal guardian's leave. Families shall provide a written statement for the child's file to document the absence.

Late Pick Up

Providers should create written procedures for addressing issues regarding children who are not picked up after the instructional day has ended and are not enrolled in extended day. The procedures should specify actions to be taken by the Pre-K provider if late pick up becomes problematic. A meeting with the parent/guardian should occur to determine the reason(s) for the problem and identify ways to resolve the problem. Inability to resolve the problem after documented interventions should be referred in writing to the program's Pre-K Consultant. **Providers may not disenroll a child without prior approval from Bright from the Start.**

3.10 Health Services

Health screenings are necessary for Georgia's Pre-K students so that any problems that might interfere with the child's ability to learn can be identified and addressed as soon as possible. All programs should ask parents the date of their child's last preventive health visit and provide a referral if the child is due for a visit.

Additional verification is required for Category One children. The Georgia Department of Community Health's guidelines require that any child eligible for Medicaid or PeachCare have a preventive health visit at ages four and five with their primary care provider (PCP) that includes a history, physical examination, anticipatory guidance, appropriate immunizations, appropriate laboratory test and other screenings. Therefore, programs should verify that Category One children have visited their PCP prior to entering Georgia's Pre-K. If a child has not had a visit, the Pre-K program should provide appropriate referrals and follow-up to parents of Category One children.

All children attending Georgia's Pre-K Program must have a Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) Certificate of Vision, Hearing, Dental, and Nutrition Screening (Form 3300) and a DPH Certificate of Immunization (Form 3231). Form 3231 must have either the *date of expiration* or *school attendance* block checked. Children who attend Pre-K must be up-to-date on all immunizations required for school entry.

Children may register and begin attending before completion of these examinations and certificates. However, the immunization certificate must be on file within 30 calendar days and the Certificate of Vision, Hearing, Dental, and Nutrition Screening indicating that children have passed these screenings must be on file within 90 calendar days of the start of the Pre-K program. Children are not required to have evidence of age-appropriate immunizations or certificates prior to these 30-day or 90-day time frames.

Expired certificates must be updated within 30 calendar days of the expiration date. Any child who does not have a completed certificate within the 30- or 90-calendar day time frames may not return to the program until an updated certificate is provided and is on-site. If a family presents a valid appointment card for either a 3231 or 3300 appointment, the child can remain in the program until the date of the appointment. An updated certificate, letter from a physician about continued treatment, or another appointment card should be provided upon the child's return to the program.

If the 3300 is marked Needs Further Professional Examination, families should be asked to bring updated and completed certificates after each appointment and follow-up visit. The Pre-K site should have documentation of the follow-up (i.e., doctor's notes, scheduled appointments, information from parents, etc.). It is the goal of the Pre-K program to have a completed and valid certificate (3231 and 3300) for each child enrolled in the Pre-K program prior to Kindergarten registration.

When children enter the program later in the year, the Pre-K provider shall make every effort to obtain the Certificate of Vision, Hearing, Dental, and Nutrition Screening as soon as possible to identify any follow-up needed. Waiting 90 days to obtain the 3300 for children who enroll later in the school year may not leave sufficient time to identify problems that could hinder the child's ability to learn.

4.0 Classroom Requirements

4.1 Approved Curricula

The Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) form the foundation for Pre-K classroom instruction (see www.gelds.decal.ga.gov for more information). The GELDS are correlated to Georgia's Kindergarten Performance Standards and to the Work Sampling System assessment indicators, thus promoting a seamless educational program for early learning. The Pre-K provider must provide a complete educational program in accordance with age-appropriate instructional practice and use a Bright from the Start approved curriculum to enhance and supplement the GELDS.

The list of approved curricula for the 2016-2017 school year is below.

Curriculum	Company
AlphaSkills Pre-K Curriculum	AlphaSkills, Inc.
Beyond Centers and Circle Time (BCCT) Curriculum Series	Kaplan Early Learning Company
Core Knowledge Preschool Curriculum	Core Knowledge Foundation
Creative Curriculum for Preschool	Teaching Strategies, LLC
DIG: Develop. Inspire. Grow	Abrams Learning Trends
Frog Street Pre-K Curriculum	Frog Street Press, Inc.
Galileo® Pre-K Online Curriculum	Assessment Technology Inc.
High Scope Preschool Curriculum	High Scope Educational Foundation
InvestiGator Club Prekindergarten Learning System	Robert-Leslie Publishing

Learn Everyday: The Preschool Curriculum	Kaplan Early Learning Company
Opening the World of Learning (OWL) Curriculum	Pearson
Scholastic Big Day for Pre-K Curriculum	Scholastic, Inc.
Splash into Pre-K Curriculum	Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
We Can Curriculum	Cambium Education
WINGS Curriculum	WINGS Curriculum, LLC

Guidelines for Choosing a Curriculum

Each Pre-K program must choose an approved curriculum; purchase the curriculum; and provide staff training associated with the curriculum. Bright from the Start does not provide additional funding for purchasing a curriculum nor the required training. Providers may use their existing Pre-K budget to purchase curriculum. It is recommended that providers explore content, costs, and hours of training needed when considering a curriculum. Additional information about each curriculum is available on the Bright from the Start website <http://dec.al.ga.gov/Prek/Curriculum.aspx>

Newly funded Pre-K programs will be required to select a specific curriculum after a grant agreement is awarded. Programs must submit a **Curriculum Selection Form (Appendix G)** to their Pre-K Consultant within one month of being funded.

Continuation programs may request to change their curriculum by submitting a **Curriculum Selection Form (Appendix G)** to their Pre-K Consultant. If the request is approved, the program will be notified of the change via e-mail.

4.2 Locally Developed Curriculum

Pre-K providers desiring to use a locally developed curriculum must submit the curriculum for approval through the curricula review process. This process takes place every three to five years. Bright from the Start must approve any locally developed curriculum before it is implemented in a program.

4.3 Supplemental Curriculum

Bright from the Start must approve the use of any supplemental curriculum. Pre-K providers must submit written requests for approval to their Pre-K Consultant. Written approval of the supplemental curriculum from Bright from the Start must be kept on-site for consultant review.

4.4 Montessori Curriculum

A Pre-K program must have approval from Bright from the Start before choosing Montessori as a curriculum. Requests for using a Montessori curriculum should be sent to the program's Pre-K Consultant.

4.5 Religious Instruction

No part of the Pre-K instructional day may be religious in nature. There are a few approved curricula which have both a secular and religious version. The secular version must be utilized in the Pre-K program. Programs may choose to offer religious instruction outside of the Pre-K instructional day.

No Pre-K funding may be utilized for religious instruction.

4.6 Lesson Plans

Written lesson plans containing specific instructional activities are required for a minimum of 6.5 hours per day. Lesson plans are expected to be completed weekly and kept on-site for the entire school year. Lesson plans should be kept organized and easily accessible for consultant review. Current year lesson plans may be reviewed by the Pre-K Consultant during site visits.

The lesson plans should be based on the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) and include educational experiences in language/literacy, math, science, social studies, creative (music, art, and drama), social and emotional, approaches to play/learning, cognitive processes, and physical development. Corresponding GELDS indicator(s) should be included on the lesson plan with each of the planned instructional activities. Outside play should be included in the written lesson plans. Meals and rest time will make up a portion of the 6.5 hour instructional day.

Lesson plans should reflect differentiated instruction based on the individual needs of all the children in the class, including children with disabilities. Goals and objectives from a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) should be used when planning instruction.

Bright from the Start provides lesson plan templates for teachers to utilize. These templates are not required but recommended because they include a place to document the required Pre-K instructional activities. The lesson plan templates and sample copies of lesson plans are located at <http://www.dec.state.ga.gov/Prek/Planning.aspx>.

Providers should refer to the ***Instructional Quality (IQ) Guide for Planning Instruction (Appendix T)*** for additional clarifications, information, and guidance in instructional planning.

4.7 Assessment

All Georgia's Pre-K Programs are required to implement the *Work Sampling System*. All programs are required to use the online version *Work Sampling Online (WSO)*.

Providers requesting to utilize any additional assessment must submit the request in writing to their Pre-K Consultant.

Teachers are required to maintain copies of the Narrative Summary Reports and Developmental Checklists. Documentation gathered in the form of notes, matrices, and photos will be uploaded and stored online. Work samples may be uploaded (recommended) or kept in each child's assessment folder. Teachers who choose not to upload work samples must enter a description and classification of work samples online as well as filing the actual work sample in the child's assessment folder.

The following student assessment data must be retained for a minimum of three years as specified in the grant agreement:

- *The Work Sampling System P-4 Developmental Checklist*
- *Work Sampling Online Narrative Summary*
- Documentation of Family Conferences

Assessment Requirements for New Teachers

New lead teachers (who have never taught in Georgia's Pre-K Program) and lead teachers who have not participated in WSO should attend *Work Sampling Online (WSO) Training*. From the beginning of school until completion of training, teachers who are not trained in WSO should gather assessment documentation on children through observational notes, work samples, matrices and photos. Teachers who do not receive training until after the fall rating period are required to complete only the narrative portion of the Georgia's Pre-K Work Sampling Progress Report which can be found on the DECAL website under the Work Sampling System Program tab.

4.8 Parent Participation

The Pre-K provider must provide opportunities for parents to participate in their child's educational experience. Parents should be encouraged to volunteer their time, talents, and experiences in the classroom. Additionally, the Pre-K provider should conduct parent meetings to keep parents informed throughout the school year.

Information on each child's performance including the *WSO Narrative Summary* should be shared with parents or guardians at the two documented family conferences required during the school year. Documentation of these conferences should be kept in each child's on-site file.

4.9 Basic Classroom Equipment, Materials and Supplies

Pre-K providers must maintain adequate and appropriate equipment, materials, and supplies for each Pre-K classroom. All equipment must be in good repair. Pre-K providers should refer to the ***Georgia's Pre-K Program Basic Equipment, Materials, and Supplies Inventory List for recommendations (See Appendix H)***.

4.10 Record Keeping

Current year records must be maintained at the Pre-K site. The Pre-K provider must retain the following records for a minimum of **three** years as specified in their grant agreement for Pre-K services:

- Pre-K Child Registration form
- Student Roster Information form
- Daily child attendance records
- Class enrollment rosters
- Age documentation
- Residency documentation
- Assessment information (see Section 4.7)
- Documentation related to suspension and/or disenrollment
- Parent orientation and conference documentation
- Category One documentation
- Receipts and other financial records supporting expenses charged to Pre-K program (see Section 20.0)

5.0 Delivery of Services

5.1 Program Administration and Supervision

Each Georgia's Pre-K program must designate an administrator to serve as Project Director. Each separate site housing Georgia's Pre-K classes must have an individual designated to serve as Site Director. The Site Director should be located on site at the Pre-K facility during the 6.5 hour instructional

day. The designated Site Director can have other duties but should be able to focus on the operation of the program during the 6.5 hour day. Persons with other responsibilities such as teaching in another classroom or preparing meals may not serve as a Site Director. A Pre-K Lead Teacher or Assistant Teacher may not also serve as Project Director or Site Director.

5.2 Classroom Delivery

Each Georgia's Pre-K classroom must have the following:

- Licensed classroom space for a minimum of 22 children
- Licensed playground space for a minimum of 22 children
- A minimum of 20 and a maximum of 22 children enrolled. Full funding is based on a class of 22 and **classes with fewer than 19 children enrolled will be considered for closure after the first roster submission)**
- Two adults (lead teacher, assistant teacher, and/or substitute) must be present and actively involved with children during the entire 6.5 hours of instructional time each day of operation, with the exception of the one half to one hour rest time.
- Approved equipment, materials, and supplies.

The maximum class size is 22 students. Exceeding the maximum number of enrolled children in a classroom may result in automatic probation. A Montessori setting serving more than 22 children requires prior approval AND the addition of staff to maintain the adult/child ratio of 1:11.

5.3 Program Delivery

The Pre-K program will provide 6.5 hours of instructional time, a minimum of 180 days per year for eligible children. Pre-K providers are required to develop a school year calendar that accounts for 190 days which includes a minimum of 180 days of instruction to children and 10 days of Pre-K related activities/duties for teachers (pre- and post-planning, staff development, Pre-K Training, in-service days). Set up and take down of the Pre-K classroom are expected to happen during pre- and post-planning days. Any changes to this requirement must be approved in writing by the program's Pre-K Consultant (see Section 1.3).

5.4 Orientation

An on-site orientation for all teaching and administrative staff and an orientation for families must be provided within 20 working days of commencement of Pre-K services for children. The school year calendar should be shared with Pre-K staff and with families during orientation meetings.

During family orientation, parents should receive written information concerning meal and extended day charges, including charges during times when children are out of school for holidays. Orientation provides an excellent opportunity for parents to complete the **Roster Information Form (Appendix D)** which captures gender, race/ethnicity, English language proficiency, and special education participation. Documentation of these orientation sessions should be available in on-site program files.

See Appendix I for Suggested Topics to Discuss at Parent Orientation. See Appendix J for Suggested Topics to Discuss at Pre-K Staff Orientation.

5.5 Licensing

The facility must meet the licensing requirements of the appropriate licensing agencies. At a minimum, the license must cover the 6.5 hour instructional program.

5.6 Substitutes

The Pre-K provider must ensure that a substitute lead teacher and/or substitute assistant teacher is present and working in the Pre-K classroom for each day that a lead teacher and/or assistant teacher is absent due to illness, required training, personal leave, etc. Refer to Section 14.0 for additional information.

5.7 Rest Time

To maximize instructional activities, rest time cannot exceed one hour per day except when necessary to address specific needs of individual children. Children who do not rest shall be given quiet activities such as books and puzzles. All children must have a covering (sheet) on their individual rest equipment (mat or cot) and a covering (blanket or sheet) for themselves. These items may be purchased with Pre-K funds or families may choose to supply them. During the scheduled rest period, a ratio of one adult providing direct supervision to 22 children is acceptable.

5.8 Program/Staff Hours

The 6.5 hours of instructional time should begin no earlier than 7:30 a.m. with hours of operation as delineated in the original approved application. The remaining working hours of the lead teacher and assistant teacher day must be used for Pre-K program activities such as family conferences, meetings, instructional planning, documenting children's progress, maintaining assessment portfolios, etc. Inappropriate duties for Pre-K teachers (lead and assistant) during the work day include, but are not limited to, bus driver, office manager, cook, and receptionist. Inappropriate use of Pre-K staff is unacceptable and may place the program on probation. This includes using staff during the Pre-K day to supervise children not enrolled in Georgia's Pre-K Program.

5.9 Transportation

Transportation services are optional and may be provided for enrolled Pre-K children at the discretion of the Pre-K provider. Transportation reimbursement shall be provided for any Category One child transported to and from the program on a daily basis as reported on rosters (See Section 19.1 for reimbursement rate). The Pre-K provider may establish reasonable transportation zones. Inaccurately reporting a child for transportation reimbursement will result in a reduction in payments and/or probation.

Field trips are considered part of the instructional program and are not considered transportation for purposes of reporting or funding.

5.10 Extended Day (Before and After School Care)

Bright from the Start does not require Pre-K programs to provide extended day services. Extended day services for Pre-K children may be provided at the parent's expense and choice. Bright from the Start recommends that fees for extended day services not exceed \$35-\$75 per week.

Income and activity eligible families may receive assistance with the cost of extended day services through the Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program. These arrangements should be made between the center, family, and local Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) office. See **Appendix K for the CAPS Referral Form for Georgia's Pre-K Program.**

5.11 Other Program Components

- A "moment of silence" is an acceptable practice at mealtimes.

- Lunch, snacks, and supervised outdoor play are part of the Pre-K program. Breakfast may be included at the discretion of the Pre-K provider but should be offered prior to the start of the 6.5 hour instructional day or as part of the instructional program (i.e., a teacher-directed language development time, a center-time activity, etc.).

6.0 Student Support

Children grow and develop at their own rate. Although there is a general predictable sequence of milestones, they may not proceed through these stages in the same way or at the same time. A child's development is influenced by many factors including the child's environment and experiences. Once children have had the opportunity to acclimate to the Pre-K classroom environment, normal differences in skills and behavior will be apparent. Sometimes a child will exhibit significant developmental, behavioral, or health issues that require special considerations. Providers should work with their Pre-K Consultant to ensure that support services are provided to children and their families. Programs may also contact their Regional Inclusion Specialist for assistance with referrals to services. A list of Inclusion Specialists can be found at <http://www.dec.state.ga.us/InclusionSupportServices.aspx>.

6.1 Children with Identified Disabilities

A child who is age-eligible for the Pre-K program and is identified as eligible for special education and/or related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) shall not be denied access to the Pre-K program. If a child is assessed and determined eligible for special education services, dual enrollment in public school system preschool special education classes and Georgia's Pre-K program is permitted.

6.2 Children with Developmental Concerns

Providers with concerns about a child's development should contact their Pre-K Consultant for support and guidance. Providers should ensure that appropriate instructional activities are planned to meet the needs of the individual children. The consultant may recommend contacting the local school system's special education services department for information regarding the referral process.

6.3 Children with Behavioral Concerns

Providers with concerns about a child's behavior should contact their Pre-K Consultant for support and guidance. Multiple strategies should be implemented within the classroom to help the child be successful before requesting more intensive interventions, such as modified day or suspension.

6.4 Student Discipline

Georgia's Pre-K is a division within Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL). Georgia's Pre-K Program's policy regarding discipline is consistent with the Core Rules in the Rules for Child Care Learning Centers, Chapter 591-1-1-.11 (discipline) as follows:

Disciplinary actions used to correct a child's behavior, guidance techniques and any activities in which the children participate or observe shall not be detrimental to the physical or mental health of any child in Georgia's Pre-K Program. Personnel shall not: physically or sexually abuse a child or engage or permit others to engage in sexually overt conduct in the presence of any child enrolled in their program; inflict corporal/physical punishment upon a child; shake, jerk, pinch or handle a child roughly; verbally abuse or humiliate a child which includes, but is not limited to, the use of threats, profanity or belittling remarks about a child or his family; isolate a child in a dark room, closet or unsupervised area; use mechanical or physical restraints or devices to discipline children; use medication to discipline or control children's behavior without written medical authorization issued by a licensed professional and given with the parent's consent; restrict

unreasonably a child from going to the bathroom; punish toileting accidents; force feed a child or withhold feeding a child regularly scheduled meals and/or snacks; force or withhold naps; allow children to discipline or humiliate other children; confine a child for disciplinary purposes; commit any criminal act, as defined under Georgia law which is set forth in O.C.G.A. Sec 16-1-1 et seq., in the presence of any child enrolled in the program

6.5 Immediate Suspension

An immediate suspension for up to two days can be made at any time the Pre-K provider determines a child is causing harm to himself/herself or others; or, a child is unable to successfully participate in program activities. The purpose of immediate suspension is to allow the program an opportunity to plan for the child's successful participation in the Pre-K program and should not be used as punishment. Programs can implement immediate suspension (up to two days) on a maximum of three occasions per child. No Bright from the Start prior approval is needed; however, the program's Pre-K Consultant must be notified, using the **Suspension Notification Form (Appendix E)**, that such action has been taken.

If all three immediate suspensions have been used and a child is a danger to self, peers, or staff, the child may be sent home for the day with a plan for the child's successful return. Programs should use the following procedure:

- Contact their Pre-K Consultant immediately. The consultant will follow up with the Regional Inclusion Specialist to consider accommodations.
- Prepare all documentation of behaviors and strategies used to address concerns. The documentation must state the behavior, how often the behavior occurs, the interventions used, and the child's response to the interventions.
- Schedule a conference with the child's family to discuss strategies and options. Document the conference.

6.6 Extended Suspension

An extended suspension (i.e., more than two days and/or more than three incidents of immediate suspension) requires prior approval from Bright from the Start. Programs must contact their Pre-K Consultant to discuss requests for extended suspension. Extended suspension without prior approval may result in a site being placed on probation.

Completed Extended Suspension Request Forms (form may be requested from the Pre-K Consultant) should be submitted via email to PreKInclusion@decal.ga.gov and include **Request for Extended Suspension** in the subject line.

6.7 Modified Day

A modified day (i.e. less than 6.5 hours of instructional time a day) requires prior approval from Bright from the Start. A modified day should be used in conjunction with conferences with the child's family and targeted classroom interventions. Programs must contact their Pre-K Consultant to discuss a request for modified day. Modifying a student's day without prior approval may result in a site being placed on probation.

Completed **Modified Day Request Forms (Appendix W)** should be sent via email to their Pre-K Consultant and include **Request for Modified Day** in the subject line.

6.8 Disenrollment Procedures

Once a child has been enrolled, he/she cannot be disenrolled from the Pre-K program unless strategies to

support the child's success have been implemented. The request for disenrollment must be made by the Pre-K Project Director. Final approval for disenrollment requests will be made by the Assistant Commissioner for Pre-K and Instructional Supports upon review of all documentation. Disenrollment without prior approval may result in a site being placed on probation.

Programs should contact their Pre-K Consultant to discuss procedures and documentation required for submitting a request for disenrollment. All disenrollment requests including supporting documentation should be sent via email to PreKInclusion@dec.al.ga.gov and include **Disenrollment Request** in the subject line.

7.0 Family Support

7.1 Objectives

Support services are a vital component to the success of the Pre-K program. Project Directors are responsible for carrying out the objectives (either directly or indirectly). The following objectives should serve as a guide for activities Pre-K providers should provide to Pre-K children and their families:

Overall Objectives:

- Health – No child should exit the Pre-K program with an undetected condition that could hinder his/her ability to learn. Any child with identified needs should be referred to the proper resource or agency for access to and coordination of services. Documentation of referrals should be kept on-site.
- Child Development – Family knowledge of the child's development and involvement in their child's educational experience should be enhanced through informational seminars, volunteer opportunities at the center/school, parent/center conferences, etc. Families should be encouraged to read to their children daily and complete activities with their children.
- Community Resources – Upon request, families should be provided information about community resources such as GED, TANF, PeachCare for Kids, help in obtaining extended day services, etc.
- Kindergarten Readiness Initiative – Assistance should be provided to obtain all necessary documentation and health related requirements for kindergarten registration before the end of the Pre-K school year.

8.0 Program Fees

8.1 Program Fees

All children must receive the same instructional opportunities during the 6.5 hour instructional program day. Program fees may not be charged to Category One or Category Two families during this time. For example, if dance, art, or computer classes are included in the 6.5 hour day, these opportunities must be free and available to all Pre-K children.

Fees cannot be charged to any child/family for services needed to operate the instructional program, such as registration, curriculum fees, classroom supplies, etc.

8.2 Requests for Donations of Classroom Supplies

Georgia's Pre-K Program provides a per classroom allotment for supplies annually to all Pre-K programs. Pre-K programs may request donations of classroom consumable supplies such as paper, crayons, glue, etc. However, these requests must be reasonable and must not be a requirement for enrollment or

participation in the Pre-K program. Solicitation of monetary donations for purchase of these supplies is not permissible. Requests can only be made for the actual items. Programs failing to adhere to this guideline or abusing this policy will be subject to probation or termination of funding.

8.3 Field Trip Donations

Field trips are a part of the instructional program. Programs may request a per child donation per field trip. Donations requested should not exceed a total of \$25 per child per year. Parents who participate in field trips may be charged a fee. If a child does not provide a donation, Pre-K funds may be used to provide the field trip for that child. A child cannot be denied participation in a field trip based on whether or not a donation was received.

8.4 Fee Structure

Policies explaining the fee structure for non-Pre-K program days (e.g., holiday/vacation times, teacher work days) for Category One and Category Two children, transportation (optional), and/or food services for Category Two children must be given to each family in writing. A copy of these policies should be kept on file. Bright from the Start may request copies of individual Pre-K provider fee structure policies. While not required, Bright from the Start recommends that providers explain and have parents sign a statement that they have received written information explaining charges for non-Pre-K program days and any transportation or meal fees.

8.5 Category One Fees

Pre-K providers may not charge fees for transportation services, if provided, for Category One students during the 180 Pre-K program days.

Pre-K providers may not charge Category One families fees for food services. Pre-K funds may be used to purchase food if no Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) funding is received.

8.6 Category Two Fees

The Pre-K provider may charge reasonable fees for health services, food services, and/or transportation services (if provided) to Category Two children/families.

8.7 Meal Fees

Bright from the Start recommends that Pre-K providers charge no more than \$30 a week for meal fees to Category Two families. Pre-K providers may **not** charge Category Two families fees for food for any child for whom CACFP reimbursement is received. Parental complaints regarding excessive meal fees will be investigated.

Pre-K providers should contact their Pre-K Consultant about continued non-payment of meal fees by a Category Two family. Disenrollment will be at the discretion of Bright from the Start.

Pre-K providers should have a written policy regarding meals served at the program including whether or not outside food for meals is allowed in the center. Programs may set up their own policies regarding outside food; however, if the center allows food to be brought in for any other age group, then children enrolled in the Georgia's Pre-K Program must also be allowed to bring in outside food. Policies regarding meals should reflect compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

8.8 School Uniforms

The purchase of school uniforms cannot be required for participation in Georgia's Pre-K Program. This

includes special attire such as T-shirts for field trips. Centers with uniform policies may request that parents dress children in uniforms. However, eligible children cannot be denied access to the Pre-K program for failure to meet the request. Providers are urged to provide uniforms for those who cannot afford them. With prior approval, Pre-K funds may be used for this purpose.

8.9 Special Family Activities

Bright from the Start encourages Pre-K providers to plan family activities that focus on celebrating children's learning and participation in Georgia's Pre-K Program. Activities such as a field day, an open house, a family/child picnic, or a luncheon are recommended. All children should be included in these activities. Practice for programs should not negatively impact instructional time. Providers may not charge families any fees for participation in these programs.

9.0 Bright from the Start Monitoring and Technical Assistance

9.1 Pre-K Consultant Support

Bright from the Start Pre-K staff work closely with providers throughout the year and are available for consultation regarding onsite technical assistance, questions about the program, problems with maintaining enrollment, approval of equipment/materials/supplies requests, training needs, etc. Staff will provide specific technical assistance to help providers maintain compliance with program requirements and thereby allow them to maintain their funding viability.

9.2 On-Site Evaluation

Bright from the Start Pre-K staff will make announced and unannounced visits throughout the school year to monitor and evaluate program progress. The monitoring process delineates the responsibilities of administrators and teachers and allows a greater focus on classroom instruction. The evaluation procedures listed below are designed to help raise instructional quality across the state.

All Georgia's Pre-K programs will be required to complete the following instructional checklists. The checklists will be used to ensure that all classrooms meet Pre-K requirements. They are used as communication tools for project/site directors and teachers, monitoring tools for Pre-K consultants, and data reporting pieces for state level reporting.

- **Grant Requirement Checklist (Appendix Q):** This checklist is used by the Project and Site Director to monitor the Pre-K grant requirements. It is meant to be used throughout the school year.
- **Instructional Quality (IQ) Guide for the Learning Environment (Appendix R):** This checklist is utilized by both teachers and directors to ensure that each Pre-K classroom is properly equipped with quality materials.
- **Instructional Quality (IQ) Guide for Daily Schedule (Appendix S):** This checklist is utilized by both teachers and directors to ensure that each classroom's daily schedule meets Pre-K guidelines.
- **Instructional Quality (IQ) Guide for Planning Instruction (Appendix T):** This checklist is utilized by both teachers and directors to ensure that lesson plan guidelines are being met. Teachers will use this checklist along with a required lesson plan template provided by Bright from the Start. Lesson plan templates are available on the Bright from the Start website.
- **Instructional Quality (IQ) Guide for Assessment: WSO Director Timeline (Appendix U):** This checklist is utilized by directors to ensure that all assessment requirements are being met.
- **Instructional Quality (IQ) Guide for Assessment: WSO Teacher Timeline (Appendix V):**

This checklist is utilized by teachers to ensure that all assessment requirements are being met.

All Georgia's Pre-K sites are required to complete the Grant Requirement Checklist (GRC) and Instructional Quality (IQ) Guides. Pre-K Consultants will monitor the use of these checklists in the following ways:

- GRC Audit: Pre-K sites are randomly selected each year to participate in a GRC visit. Part one of the audit will be conducted between September and December. Part two of the audit will be conducted between January and April. Monitoring guides and the GRC checklist will be used to evaluate the program. Pre-K Consultant will review each checklist for completion and accuracy.
- Roster Verification Visits: Pre-K sites are randomly selected each year to participate in one full roster verification visit to take place between September and April. During this visit, a Pre-K Consultant will review rosters and children's records for completion and accuracy.
- Program Visits: Each consultant will review and use checklists to guide technical assistance at both the classroom and program level.
- All probation sites will be subject to full monitoring visits at multiple times throughout the program year.

If a site or classroom does not meet at least forty five percent of the reviewed items, the consultant will refer the program to be reviewed for the Pre-K Quality Support Program. Based on the review, the site may be placed on probation or their funding will be discontinued.

9.3 Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Visits

The CLASS will be used in Georgia's Pre-K classrooms to obtain classroom quality data. The CLASS will be completed utilizing four 20 minute observations, each followed by a 10 minute coding period. Repeated observation cycles help establish an accurate, complete picture of the classroom. CLASS scores will not be used for the purpose of individual teacher evaluation. Teachers will receive feedback showing how they compare to national and state averages. The results from the 2016-2017 data will be used to plan for professional development in subsequent years.

10.0 Probation

10.1 Definition and Reasons for Probation

Probation is a status that warns a provider of the possibility of funding loss due to program quality issues or failure to follow the *Pre-K Providers' Operating Guidelines*. Programs on probation are not guaranteed continuing classes for the following year. The grant agreement may either be held or not offered.

The following may place a Pre-K program on probation:

- Failure to meet at least forty five percent of the reviewed items during the GRC audit
- Failure to correct on-going Pre-K issues
- Multiple instances of failing to follow the *Pre-K Providers' Operating Guidelines*
- Failure to submit required reports, information and documents to Bright from the Start by due dates
- Failure to notify Bright from the Start of any changes in teaching staff
- Serious or repeated instances involving noncompliance with Bright from the Start program requirements (Pre-K, Child Care Services, Nutrition Services, Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS), or Audit/AUP)
- Disenrollment or extended suspension without prior approval (See Sections 6.6 and 6.8.)
- Ineligible student birthdates and lack of supporting birth documentation
- Lack of credentialed teaching staff (See Section 12.3 and 13.3)

- Exceeding the maximum allowance of 22 students per class
- Inaccurate roster reporting
- Moving a Pre-K class without permission from Bright from the Start

10.2 Probation Process

- Pre-K Consultants will use the checklists described in Section 9.2 to evaluate compliance with the requirements for Georgia's Pre-K Program. **The Pre-K Project Director must submit a written response for areas failing to meet requirements within 10 days of the evaluation.** A request for technical assistance may be included in the response.
- Programs that have excessive or ongoing unresolved areas of noncompliance will be referred to the Pre-K Quality Support Program resulting in a probationary status. Participation in this program is a two-year process.
- Sites participating in the Pre-K Quality Support Program will receive a minimum of three site visits during the school year to monitor and report on progress.
- An office conference with the Pre-K Project Director and Bright from the Start staff will be scheduled for programs on probation. During the meeting, the probation process and the requirements for returning to good standing will be discussed.
- Targeted technical assistance based on identified needs and goals will be provided to programs participating in the Pre-K Quality Support Program.

10.3 Probation Funding Considerations

Programs not making adequate progress in the quality support program will be in jeopardy of losing Pre-K funding. Sites failing to make progress may lose funding for at least one class during the initial year of probation. Reducing the number of classes has been an effective means for quality improvement; it is easier to maintain quality with fewer classes. Sites with only one class may lose all Pre-K funding at the discretion of Bright from the Start. Sites with serious or repeated instances involving noncompliance with Bright from the Start program requirements (Pre-K, Child Care Services, Nutrition Services, CAPS, or Audit/AUP) may lose all Pre-K funding regardless of the number of years in the process.

10.4 Office Conferences

Bright from the Start reserves the right to schedule an office conference with any Pre-K provider. If an office conference is scheduled, requested participants are required to attend. Failure to participate in a mandatory meeting may result in immediate probation or possible termination of the Pre-K grant agreement during the program year.

10.5 Peer Review Process

Programs that continue to have unresolved probation issues, despite technical assistance, may have their Georgia's Pre-K Program grant agreement denied or revoked. In such circumstances, providers may appeal the Bright from the Start decision before a Peer Review Committee. The Peer Review process is not available to Pre-K programs identified with serious or repeated instances involving noncompliance with program requirements (Child Care Services, Nutrition Services, CAPS, Audit/AUP), fraudulent rosters or teacher credentials, audit (Pre-K or federal nutrition programs) irregularities, loss of nutrition program due to serious deficiencies, termination from CAPS, low enrollment, and/or repeated issues with teacher credentials.

11.0 General Personnel Information

11.1 Records Check Determination

In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-1A-30 *et. seq.*, on or after January 1, 2014, all new employees shall obtain a satisfactory records check determination or have had an unsatisfactory records check determination reversed in accordance with O.C.G.A § 20-1A-43 prior to being present at a facility while children are present for care. By no later than January 1, 2017, all current employees hired prior to January 1, 2014, shall have a satisfactory records check determination or have had an unsatisfactory records check determination reversed in accordance with O.C.G.A § 20-1A-43 to be present at a facility while children are present for care. Effective January 1, 2019, every employee must have a satisfactory records check determination or have had an unsatisfactory records check determination reversed in accordance with O.C.G.A § 20-1A-43 within the past (5) years in order to be present at a facility while children are present for care.

If Grantee is not a licensed child care learning center and participates in Georgia's Pre-K Program as approved by the Grantor, Grantee then must comply with O.C.G.A. § 20-1A-30 *et. seq.* or similar state or federal requirements. Grantee must allow, upon the request of the Grantor or its authorized representatives, the review of all necessary documentation for compliance purposes.

11.2 Employees

All Pre-K program personnel are employees of the Pre-K provider for whom they work, not Bright from the Start or the State of Georgia.

12.0 Lead Teachers

12.1 Days of Service

All lead teachers are funded for 190 days of service – 180 days of classroom instruction to Pre-K children (or the equivalent if a modified calendar is approved) and 10 days of Pre-K related activities/duties (pre/post planning, staff development, Pre-K training, in-service days). Bright from the Start does not maintain personnel policies for Pre-K teachers. Pre-K programs should provide teachers with a contract or work agreement outlining sick leave and holiday policies.

12.2 Age Requirement

All lead teachers must be 21 years of age or older. **Exception:** Lead teachers who have a valid Bachelor degree or higher teaching credential do not have to meet the minimum 21 years of age requirement. The teacher must, however, meet the age requirement for the facility's licensing agencies.

12.3 Credential / Certification Requirements

A Georgia's Pre-K Program lead teacher must have one of the following valid and current certificates or credentials listed below. Pre-K providers should review the qualifications and conditions carefully to ensure that the lead teacher qualifies to teach in Georgia's Pre-K. *The salary rates reflect 100% of the base salary funded by Bright from the Start to the provider.*

Note: Early Childhood Education (ECE)/related degrees and credentials are verified in the Georgia Professional Development System (GaPDS). Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC)

Two Year Degree (Grandfathered Associate Degree or Montessori Diploma)

The Associate Degree/Montessori Diploma applies only to Pre-K lead teachers who were approved in the 2009-2010 school year with an approved ECE Associate Degree or Montessori Diploma. These teachers will be considered approved as long as they continue employment as a lead teacher with the same program. If the teacher leaves the current program in which he/she is approved, he/she will be required to meet the minimum Bachelor’s Degree requirement in the new classroom. If the program currently approved to have an Associate Degree/Montessori Diploma teacher replaces that teacher, the minimum education requirement of a Bachelor Degree or higher credential will apply.

The followed are the only grandfathered credentials:

- Associate of Science/Arts (ECE or related)
- Associate of Applied Science/Technology (ECE or related)
- Montessori Diploma (ECE, minimum of two years coursework)

Two Year Degree Lead Teacher Salary: \$21,029.27

Minimum Salary Requirement: \$18,926.34

certification is verified through review of www.gapsc.com for all certified teachers.

Bachelor’s Degree not related to Early Childhood Education - NEW REQUIREMENT

A teacher with a Bachelor’s degree not related to Early Childhood Education must also hold one of the following approved ECE credentials:

- Associate degree with ECE major
- Montessori diploma from a Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE) Program
- Technical College Diploma (TCD) with ECE major
- Technical Certificate of Credit (TCC) with ECE major

Returning Pre-K Lead Teachers: DECAL will allow current 2015-2016 lead teachers who hold a verified Non-ECE degree that contains 15 semester or 25 quarter hours of accumulated ECE-related coursework to continue teaching with their current credential. Returning lead teacher must meet the new requirement for non-ECE bachelor’s or have another qualifying credential by school year 2019-2020.

New Pre-K Lead Teachers: All lead teachers who are not currently teaching Pre-K and who are hired for school year 2016-2017 must meet the new requirement for non-ECE bachelor’s degree listed above.

For information about possible scholarships or educational counseling, go to <http://www.decalscholars.com>

Non-ECE degrees are eligible for salary at the Four Year Degree rate: \$26,780.00

Minimum Salary Requirement: \$24,102.00

ECE or ECE-Related Bachelor’s Degree – Four Year Degree or Higher Credential (Masters, Specialist, etc.)

Early Childhood Education (P-5)

Birth Through Kindergarten (B-K)

Early Childhood Special Education General Curriculum (P-5)

Special Education Preschool (ages 3-5)
Child and Family Development
Child Development
Elementary Education
Family & Consumer Science/Home Economics (6-12)
Infant and Child Development
Special Education General Curriculum (P-12)
Special Education Adapted Curriculum (P-12)
Four Year Degree Lead Teacher Salary: \$26,780.00
Minimum Salary Requirement: \$24,102.00

T4 (Four Year Degree and Georgia teaching certificate issue by the GaPSC) Teaching Certificate Level 4, Certificate Type: Standard Professional (SRT), Performance Based Professional (PRT), Life Certificate (DT), Induction Pathway Certificates (INT1, INT2, INT3 and INT4), and Supplemental Induction (SIT)	
PSC Certification Field Codes	
FLD808	Early Childhood Education (P-5)
FLD870	Birth Through Kindergarten (B-K)
FLD708	Early Childhood Special Education General Curriculum (P-5)
FLD799	Special Education Preschool (ages 3-5)
FLD826	Special Education Preschool (ages 3-5) Endorsement
FLD805	Special Education Adapted Curriculum (P-12) PLUS all of the Special Education Academic Content Concentrations (Language Arts, Mathematics, Reading, Science and Social Studies)
FLD798	Special Education General Curriculum (P-12) PLUS all of the Special Education Academic Content Concentrations (Language Arts, Mathematics, Reading, Science and Social Studies)
FLD732	Reading Specialist (P-12)
FLD885	ESOL English to Speakers of Other Languages (P-12)
Important Information:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out-of-state certified at the Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education applies to one school year only. • Only the certifications in the field codes listed above qualify for certified teacher funding rates. The "Issue Date" is the beginning date of certification for Georgia's Pre-K teachers. Bright from the Start does not issue waivers for certification; therefore, teachers who have pending certification are paid at the verified credential level. 	
T4 Lead Teacher Salary: \$35,118.35	
Minimum Salary Requirement: \$31,606.52	

T5 (Master's Degree and Georgia teaching certificate issue by the GaPSC) Teaching Certificate Level 5, Certificate Type: Standard Professional (SRT), Performance Based Professional (PRT), Advanced Professional (APT), Lead Professional (LPT), Life Certificate (DT), Induction Pathway Certificates (INT1, INT2, INT3 and INT4), Supplemental Induction (SIT)	
PSC Certification Field Codes	
FLD808	Early Childhood Education (P-5)
FLD870	Birth Through Kindergarten (B-K)
FLD708	Early Childhood Special Education General Curriculum (P-5)
FLD799	Special Education Preschool (ages 3-5)
FLD826	Special Education Preschool (ages 3-5) Endorsement

FLD805	Special Education Adapted Curriculum (P-12) PLUS all of the Special Education Academic Content Concentrations (Language Arts, Mathematics, Reading, Science and Social Studies)
FLD798	Special Education General Curriculum (P-12) PLUS all of the Special Education Academic Content Concentrations (Language Arts, Mathematics, Reading, Science and Social Studies)
FLD732	Reading Specialist (P-12)
FLD885	ESOL English to Speakers of Other Languages (P-12)
Important Information:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out-of-state certified at the Master’s level in Early Childhood Education applies to one school year only. • Only the certifications in the field codes listed above qualify for certified teacher funding rates. The “Issue Date” is the beginning date of certification for Georgia’s Pre-K teachers. Bright from the Start does not issue waivers for certification; therefore, teachers who have pending certification are paid at the verified credential level. • Classes that have teachers with a GaPSC certificate issued at the Specialists degree level (Certificate Level 6) or Doctoral degree level (Certificate Level 7) will be funded at the T5 rate. 	
T5 Lead Teacher Salary: \$39,552.00	
Minimum Salary Requirement: \$35,596.80	

12.4 Out-of-Country Credentials

Degrees completed outside of the U.S. or in a U.S. commonwealth or territory must have a course evaluation from an approved GaPSC/GaPDS foreign credential evaluator. The list of approved evaluators may be accessed at

<http://www.gapsc.com/MoveToGeorgia/FromOutSideUSA/foreignCredentialReports.aspx>

12.5 Online Credentials

Online degree programs can be verified through the Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools at www.sacscoc.org or with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education at <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation>. Other online degree programs may be acceptable with proof of approved credibility and certification.

12.6 Lead Teachers Salary Components

Beginning in the 2016 -2017 school year, the lead teacher salary will have two components: base salary and supplemental compensation. Base salary is based on the teacher’s verified credential(s). Supplemental compensation is based on the teacher’s creditable years of experience.

- **Base Salary**

Bright from the Start requires Pre-K providers to pay lead teachers a minimum base salary based on the teacher’s verified credentials. The base salary rates listed in Section 12.3 reflect 100% of the salary funded by Bright from the Start to the provider. The salary does not include any additional compensation or benefits the teacher may receive.

Providers are required to pay lead teachers a minimum of 90% of the total salary funded by Bright from the Start. Salaries are negotiated between the provider and the teacher. Providers have the ability to set base salary levels as long as the minimum salary requirement is met.

- **Supplemental Compensation – Lead Teachers**

Bright from the Start provides supplemental compensation for all lead teachers. Supplemental compensation includes a 3% increase in base salary for each two years of creditable years of experience up to 20 years.

Supplemental compensation is cumulative and is based on the teacher's history as a Georgia's Pre-K lead teacher and/or history as a certified lead teacher in a K-12 public school.

Providers are required to pay teachers 100% of supplemental compensation. This supplement should be part of the lead teacher's salary and should be paid in a manner consistent with the base salary (weekly, monthly, etc.). The supplement may not be used as a salary bonus. It is not acceptable to hold the salary supplement and pay mid-year or at the completion of the school year.

12.7 Creditable Years of Experience

For Georgia's Pre-K Program, *Creditable Years of Experience* (CYE) are defined as all years taught as a lead teacher in a Georgia's Pre-K Program (public or private) with an approved credential and/or all years taught as a certified lead teacher in a K-12 public school. A teacher must have taught for at least six months of the school year (60% of the year) to receive credit for one full year. CYE do not have to be consecutive. Years of experience taught in another state will count toward creditable years of experience if the teacher held a valid, in-field state education certificate related to the field of employment and was under contract during the period in which the experience was earned.

Pre-K providers will be responsible for developing written processes and/or policies regarding verification of CYE for their program. Teacher contracts, PANDA roster information, and teacher history data are examples of what can be used to determine a teacher's creditable years of experience. Bright from the Start will conduct audits to review the CYE reported by programs. When determining a teacher's creditable years of experience, the provider should count the years at their program as well as the years the teacher taught in another Georgia's Pre-K Program (public or private) with an approved credential and/or all the years taught as a certified teacher in a K-12 public school.

12.8 Training & Experience (T & E)

Public school providers with Pre-K lead teachers that are currently receiving a capped T & E supplement will continue receiving the T & E supplement for those teachers. These teachers are eligible for supplemental compensation. However, because they have already been compensated for previous years taught (T & E compensation), the supplemental compensation will apply to their history after the 2010-2011 school year.

Pre-K providers should address questions about teaching credentials and teacher salaries to panda.teachers@dec.al.ga.gov.

13.0 Assistant Teachers

13.1 Days of Service

All assistant teachers are funded for 190 days of service – 180 days of classroom instruction to Pre-K children and 10 days of Pre-K related activities/ duties (pre/post planning, staff development, Pre-K training, in-service days).

13.2 Employment Requirements

An assistant teacher must be 21 years of age or older. **Exception:** Assistant teachers who have a valid AA credential or higher teaching credential do not have to meet the minimum 21 years of age requirement. The teacher must, however, meet the age requirement for the facility's licensing agencies.

13.3 Credential/Certification Requirements

Any ONE of the following credentials/degrees listed below will meet the credential requirement for a Pre-K

assistant teachers:

- Valid Paraprofessional Certificate (issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission)
- Valid Child Development Associate (CDA) credential (issued by the Council for Professional Recognition)
- TCC (Technical Certificate of Credit) in Early Childhood Education
- TCD (Technical College Diploma) in Early Childhood Education
- AA, AS, AAS, AAT (Associate Degree)
- BA, BS (Bachelor Degree)
- Georgia PSC Certified Teacher
- MA, MS (Master's Degree)
- Specialist Degree or PhD

A CDA credential is valid for three years from the award date, after which it may be renewed in five-year increments. Information regarding the CDA credential is available through the Council for Professional Recognition at www.cdacouncil.org.

For information regarding the Technical Certificate of Credit, please refer to the Technical College System of Georgia website at www.tcsg.edu for enrollment information.

For information about possible scholarships or educational counseling, visit <http://www.decalscholars.com>.

13.4 Salaries – Assistant Teachers

All credentials for an assistant teacher will be paid at the minimum rate of \$15,561.66. Providers are required to pay 100% of the total salary funded by the Department for assistant teachers. Bright from the Start does not provide supplemental compensation for assistant teachers. The minimum salary amount does not include any additional compensation or benefits the assistant teacher may receive.

14.0 Substitute Teachers

14.1 Substitute Teacher Employment Requirements

The Pre-K provider must ensure that a substitute lead teacher and/or substitute assistant teacher is present and working in the Pre-K classroom (during the 180 day student school year) for each day that a lead teacher and/or assistant teacher is absent.

A substitute teacher must meet ALL of the following minimum requirements:

- Must be 21 years of age. Exception: Substitute teachers who have a valid AA credential or higher teaching credential do not have to meet the minimum 21 years of age requirement. The substitute teacher must, however, meet the age requirement for the facility's licensing agencies.
- Possess a high school diploma or its equivalent Satisfactory Records Check Determination

14.2 Short-Term Substitutes

A short-term substitute is a substitute who serves in the Pre-K classroom while a lead or an assistant teacher is out of the classroom due to illness, personal leave, or professional development training. A short-term substitute may serve in the classroom anywhere from a few hours up to three weeks. No prior approval from Bright from the Start is needed for a short-term substitute. If a lead or assistant teacher will be out for more than three continuous weeks but is returning to his/her position, then a long-term substitute must be used.

Roster Reporting: Providers should not update the Teacher Information Screen in PANDA when a short-term substitute is working in the classroom.

14.3 Long-Term Substitutes

A long-term substitute is a substitute for the lead teacher or assistant teacher who will be in the Pre-K classroom for longer than three weeks. Programs are required to submit a **Long-Term Substitute Request Form (Appendix M)** to their Pre-K Consultant for approval. **Requests will only be approved for extended medical leave, maternity/paternity leave, or a student teaching program.** Programs should attempt to hire long-term substitutes with a credential equivalent to the credential of the original lead teacher.

The Pre-K Consultant will review any requests for long-term substitutes and contact the program for any additional information if needed. Once the program receives approval, the approval should be kept on file. The program is responsible for informing the Pre-K Consultant of any changes such as a change in return date for the teacher or a change in substitute teachers. Funding for long term substitutes will be determined by Bright from the Start.

Roster Reporting: No roster changes are required unless the long-term substitute has a credential that is higher than the original lead teacher. If the credential is higher, he or she should be entered on the roster so payment can be adjusted accordingly. When the lead teacher returns, the roster should be updated to show the original lead teacher. If a lead or assistant teacher will be out of a classroom for longer than three weeks for reasons other than extended medical leave, maternity/paternity leave or a student teaching program, a new teacher should be hired and submitted through the roster process.

Teachers Not Returning

If a lead teacher or assistant teacher does not return at the beginning of the school year, resigns during the school year, or has been terminated from his/her position, the program is responsible for staffing the class with a teacher until a replacement has been hired. The replacement is not considered a substitute in that the original teacher is not returning.

Roster Reporting: At the beginning of the school year, if there is no designated replacement teacher in the class, the program should leave the teacher information fields blank. If the teacher resigns during the school year or has been terminated from his/her position, the program should update the roster to include the original teacher's last day in the class and the date the replacement teacher began teaching. If multiple teachers are used, the program should select the "Is Substitute" box in the Teacher Information Screen in PANDA. Classes staffed with multiple teachers over a period of time will be paid at the assistant teacher pay rate.

15.0 Professional Development

15.1 Georgia Professional Development System (GaPDS)

The Georgia Professional Development System (GaPDS) is a database specifically for those who work directly with young children or on their behalf. Beginning on June 27, 2016, the GaPDS replaced the Professional Development Registry (PDR). When the PDR was upgraded to the GaPDS, information from the PDR transferred to the GaPDS. Individuals that enrolled in the PDR are automatically enrolled in the GaPDS.

For individuals, the GaPDS combines education, experience and training and assigns all registrants a level on the “Career Level” chart. Supporting documents must be submitted to confirm educational attainment and training. Supporting documents include official transcripts, training certificates, copies of CDAs and technical college credentials. The Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) reviews transcripts and credentials for the GaPDS to verify an individual teacher’s credentials and degrees. Until a teacher is enrolled in the GaPDS, the eligibility to serve in the lead or assistant teacher role has not been established. Project Directors must enter staff in PANDA, but the GaPDS is an individual – based system and staff must enroll themselves.

Lead and assistant teachers must be enrolled in GaPDS before a student roster is submitted where they are assigned as the lead or assistant teacher in a classroom. A teacher hired after a roster submission (between submissions) must be registered prior to the next roster submission. A GaPDS number is required in PANDA for all Georgia’s Pre-K lead teachers and assistant teachers. If a teacher has been certified as a Georgia teacher or paraprofessional through the Professional Development Standards Commission (PSC), the teacher should indicate this when he/she registers in the GaPDS. If not, he/she will need to follow the instructions from the GaPDS and submit the requested proof of what he/she entered in the GaPDS. Any level of degree must be supported by an official transcript from an accredited institution. If a teacher’s credential cannot be verified, an email from PANDA will prompt the Project Director to have the teacher review their GaPDS profile and submit the appropriate credential information.

Failure to have credentials current and verified in the GaPDS will affect Pre-K payments. It is imperative that Project Directors verify that credential information is correct on rosters. Project Directors should also confirm that teachers have registered in the GaPDS, submitted required documentation to the GaPDS, and the GaPDS has verified the credential.

Questions regarding enrolling in the GaPDS or assistance with an account should be directed to gapds@dec.al.ga.gov or 678-717-5827 Metro Atlanta Area or Out of State 1-888-92-GAPDS (42737) Georgia except for Metro Atlanta

Questions regarding credentials and PDS Career levels or assistance with teacher certification should be directed to gapds@gapsc.com or 404-334-6461 Metro Atlanta or Out of State 1-866-258-7737 Georgia except for Metro Atlanta

Credential documents required to be mailed should be mailed to the GaPSC and not Bright from the Start.

Georgia Professional Standards Commission
Professional Development Registry
200 Piedmont Avenue SE
Suite 1702 West
Atlanta, GA 30334-9032

Failure to use this address could result in documents being lost or a significant delay in processing.

15.2 Purpose of Professional Development for Teachers

Bright from the Start offers multiple professional development opportunities for Pre-K teachers. Professional development training is intended to enhance the skills and knowledge of teaching staff

already prepared to teach in the Pre-K program. Each provider is responsible for ensuring that all teaching staff is qualified and able to deliver quality instruction on the date they are hired. Lack of availability of Bright from the Start sponsored teacher professional development should not impact the ability of staff to deliver quality instruction to Pre-K children.

15.3 Requirements of Professional Development

To maintain quality standards, annual professional development is required for all teachers directly associated with the Pre-K program. Staff attendance at required training sessions will be verified by a Pre-K Consultant. Failure of providers and their staff to participate in required training will place their program in noncompliance and may result in probation. Bright from the Start cannot guarantee training will be held in a specific region.

15.4 Professional Development Registration

The Pre-K Project Director is responsible for distributing professional development and training information to their sites and all personnel. The Project Director can register staff for Pre-K training in the GaPDS. For help with professional development needs, Pre-K providers should contact their Pre-K Consultant.

15.5 Attendance at Professional Development Training

All administrative, teaching, and support staff listed below will have the opportunity to attend Bright from the Start sponsored professional development annually. Additional details about professional development requirements for the 2016-2017 school year will be released in late July 2016.

- Project Directors
- Site Directors / Principals
- Lead Teachers
- Assistant Teachers

All lead teachers and assistant teachers working in Georgia's Pre-K classrooms are required to meet the professional development requirement, including additional staff in Montessori classrooms and inclusion classrooms. Bright from the Start sponsored professional development is provided free of charge.

Professional development is required for all new Project Directors and optional for new Site Directors.

15.6 No Shows and Repeat Training Penalty

The Pre-K Project Director is responsible for canceling participants for training in the GaPDS. Providers who register participants for training and do not cancel in the GaPDS system will be charged \$50. Providers cannot substitute inappropriate staff in the place of a staff registered for training. For example, if a lead teacher cannot attend training, a Site Director cannot attend for him/her. In the case of a "no show," \$50 for each participant will be deducted from the next Pre-K payment. In the case of a dispute, the provider must present written confirmation from Bright from the Start that the training was cancelled within the required time frame.

"Repeat training" or "incorrect training" for teaching staff will also result in a \$50 charge. Providers should review the training history page in the GaPDS for new and returning teachers to determine what Bright from the Start professional development/training they have taken in the past before registering them for training for the current school year. In the case of a "repeat or incorrect training," \$50 for each participant will be deducted from the next Pre-K payment.

15.7 Child Care Licensing Information Regarding Training

All Bright from the Start sponsored training is approved for licensing purposes for second year* lead teachers and assistant teachers. One hour of training counts as one hour of required training for licensed child care learning centers for regulatory purposes. First year* lead teachers and teacher assistants, who have not worked in a Pre-K program at another site, may utilize only four clock hours of Best Practices training toward their mandatory 10 hours of training.

**First year and second year refer to number of years a teacher has worked at the center in all capacities, not just Pre-K. See Bright from the Start's Rules for Child Care Learning Centers, Chapter 591-1-1-.33 (Staff Training).*

15.8 Professional Development/Training Reimbursement to Staff

Pre-K funds must be used to pay for substitutes and costs associated with staff travel (lodging and meals in conjunction with overnight travel, mileage, parking, etc.) to all required professional development/training sessions. Pre-K funds should cover salaries and wages as well as travel expenses for staff when attending required sessions. Bright from the Start recommends that Pre-K providers develop and distribute travel/expense reimbursement policies to employees prior to travel; that providers discuss travel/expense policies with employees; and that providers ask employees to sign a statement that they understand the policies before they travel.

16.0 Grant Award Notification and Budgets

16.1 Awarding of Grant Agreements

For the 2016-2017 school year, programs will receive their Georgia's Pre-K Grant Agreement via email. Grant agreements will be awarded to Pre-K providers subject to funding availability, previous program compliance (for continuation programs in good standing), and identified regional need. Compliance and good standing with other Bright from the Start programs (Child Care Services, Nutrition Services, Audits, CAPS, and Quality Initiatives) are also considered before awarding a grant agreement. Programs are considered in "good standing" if they have maintained full classes, met all program and reporting requirements, met child care licensing regulations if applicable, met federal nutrition program rules if applicable, have no unresolved audit or reconciliation issues, and are not on probation. Bright from the Start will enter into a grant agreement with public and private providers for Pre-K services.

Note: All payments are subject to state data processing and bank processing delays.

16.2 Class Budget

Classes with enrollments of 22 students will receive full funding. Funding for classes with fewer than 22 students will be reduced by 1/22nd for each child below 22. Classes with fewer than 19 students are subject to closure at the discretion of Bright from the Start.

16.3 Grant Agreement Signatory

The legal signatory (CEO, COO, CFO, President, Sole Proprietor, School Superintendent) who has apparent authority or legal authority for the program/company/school system/etc. applying for the grant must sign the grant agreement.

16.4 Multi-County and Multi-Program Pre-K Providers

Bright from the Start will issue one operating grant agreement containing separate funding amounts for each site. Funds are class-specific; therefore, Pre-K providers must spend the required minimum levels for teacher salaries and supplies for each class at each site.

16.5 Low Student Enrollment

Bright from the Start will review roster reports throughout the school year. Classes with fewer than 19 children will be considered for closure during the school year at the discretion of the Department. Any provider reporting fewer than 19 children on the final roster of the 2016-2017 school year will not automatically be awarded a continuation class. Bright from the Start will review final rosters; contact providers directly concerning low numbers of children; and make a final determination about continuation of services.

Providers should not operate partially or fully funded private classes in an effort to receive funding from Bright from the Start. Providers must understand that operating private classes or funding classes at their own expense does not guarantee Bright from the Start funding. Parents should be informed prior to the beginning of school if their children are enrolled in a class that is not funded by Bright from the Start.

16.6 Funding Calculation

Funding is based on program type and zone (Private Metro, Private Non-Metro, and Public School), the number of children served, and the lead teacher credential verified through the Georgia Professional Development System. The actual reimbursement amount may vary based on changes in class size, changes in lead teacher credential and number of days offering service. See section 19.1 for the 2016-2017 Rate Chart.

In addition to the base rates, grantees offering transportation services for children whose families participate in a means-tested program (Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, etc.) may receive transportation reimbursement at a rate of \$16.50 per month for each child.

Start-up grants are given for newly awarded classrooms in the amount of \$8,000 per class.

17.0 Expenditure Requirements

17.1 Expenditure Guidelines

The following expenditure guidelines apply to all Pre-K providers:

- All programs are required to pay lead teachers a minimum of 90% of the total salary funded by Bright from the Start.
- All programs are required to pay lead teachers 100% of the supplemental salary funded by Bright from the Start.
- All programs must spend a minimum of \$1,000 per classroom on classroom equipment, replacement classroom materials, classroom supplies, and/or additional classroom materials. These funds are included in the Pre-K operating grant agreement. Classroom supplies and materials should be selected from the **Georgia's Pre-K Program Basic Equipment, Materials, and Supplies Inventory List (Appendix H)**. Flexibility related to classroom computer technology purchases and playground equipment is provided with prior approval from the Pre-K Consultant, once the classroom is adequately equipped. (See sections 17.3 and 17.4)
- The Pre-K provider may use no more than six percent of the budget for administrative expenses. However, when completing the reconciliation report, the provider should enter the total amount of allocated administrative expenses incurred even if the total amount exceeds six percent.

17.2 Operating Costs

The 2016-2017 Pre-K Annual Rates chart itemizes the core costs of the program (salary and operating) by the budget cost drivers (program type and zone, and lead teacher credential level). The rate chart combines the prior year cost categories of Benefits and Non-Instructional funding into the *Operating* category.

Examples of operating costs include: instructional supplies and materials, training and other items included in Appendix H; Pre-K's portion of the director's salary and benefits, office supplies, accounting and/or clerical costs; Pre-K's portion of properly allocated and documented rent, utilities, liability insurance, etc.; and other allowable direct and indirect costs incurred for the Pre-K program.

Examples of benefits, which are also considered operating costs, include: health insurance, life insurance, flexible benefits such as dental and vision, dependent child care, and the provider's portion of federal and state taxes.

17.3 Playground Equipment

Purchase of stationary playground equipment requires prior approval from a provider's Pre-K Consultant. Approval is granted on a case-by-case basis. Purchases of stationary playground equipment with Pre-K funds without prior approval may result in the return of the expended funds. The deadline to submit for approval is April 14, 2017.

17.4 Instructional Technology

Approval is not required for technology items included in the ***Georgia's Pre-K Program Basic Equipment, Materials, and Supplies Inventory List (Appendix H)***. For all technology items not on the list, prior approval is required from the provider's Pre-K Consultant. . Using Pre-K funds to purchase technology not listed on the *Georgia's Pre-K Program Basic Equipment, Materials, and Supplies Inventory List* may result in the return of the expended funds. The deadline to submit for approval is April 14, 2017.

17.5 Expenditure Waivers

To support quality programming, a Pre-K provider may request a waiver of the requirement concerning expenditures for materials/supplies and minimum teacher salary.

A waiver for up to \$1,000 for the materials and supplies requirement may be requested if all classrooms and the playground at the site are well equipped. The Pre-K Consultant must verify that classrooms and playground are well equipped using current monitoring tools and checklists. To receive a waiver, the Project Director must contact their Pre-K Consultant who will facilitate the approval of the waiver request. If a waiver is granted, the unexpended material and supply funds may be used for teacher salary and benefits, field trips, or other instructional activities only. Funds cannot be applied to non-instructional items. The waiver is approved for one year only.

Providers must meet the salary requirements for lead teachers and assistant teachers as listed in Section 12.3, 12.6 and Section 13.4. In the case where a lead teacher or assistant teacher is absent frequently during the year and the substitute for that teacher is paid at a lower rate, the unused funds for the base portion of teacher salary received by the program can be applied to instructional items. Unused salary funds cannot be used for non-instructional items. The Project Director should contact the Pre-K Consultant who will facilitate the approval of the waiver request. The waiver is approved for one year only.

17.6 Capital Improvements

Capital improvements are costs related to improvements that extend the useful life of property, improves the quality of a product, or adds value to capital assets such as buildings and vehicles. Capital assets are

assets that have a useful life longer than one year and are not intended for sale during the normal course of business.

For Pre-K related purposes, capital improvements are not allowable Pre-K expenditures. Examples include, but are not limited to purchases and installation of:

- Roofing
- Tile
- Carpet
- Doors or windows
- Wallpaper
- Air conditioning
- Burglar alarm system

For Pre-K related purposes, replacement parts for capital assets and repairs to capital assets such as buildings and transportation vehicles are not allowable Pre-K expenditures.

17.7 Record Keeping

The Pre-K provider is required to keep all receipts and other records necessary to support figures reported on the annual reconciliation report. If a Pre-K program is audited and receipts and other records are not available to support these amounts, funds must be returned to Bright from the Start. Examples of such records include, but are not limited to:

- Canceled check copies (front and back)
- Bank statements
- Paid invoices
- Federal and state payroll records
- EFTPS or other evidence of taxes remitted to regulatory agencies
- Timesheets
- Pre-K grant agreement
- Original receipts for equipment, materials, and supplies for Georgia's Pre-K classrooms
- Documentation of Pre-K's portion of operating expenses
- Special allotment funding
- Approval documentation for special allotment funding purchases
- Approved waivers
- Appropriate allocation methodology

The Pre-K provider shall maintain full and complete program funding and expense records pertaining to the grant agreement for a period of three years beyond the ending date, or until all litigation, claims, or audit/review findings involving the records have been resolved if such claim or audit/review is started before the expiration date of the three-year period.

Misuse of funds may result in denial of current and future participation in the Pre-K program and/or in prosecution. See Section 20.0 for more details on audits/reviews.

18.0 Reimbursement Process

18.1 Automatic Deposit of Funds

All payments will be deposited in the Pre-K provider's bank account via an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)

process. Appropriate forms and instructions to allow for EFT were included in the application package. Providers are responsible for the correct routing of their payments by promptly notifying Bright from the Start of changes in bank account information or ownership. Providers are responsible for reviewing their monthly payments and payment documentation each month. After May 12, 2017, all Pre-K payments shall be final. No additional corrections, adjustments, or payment processing shall be made after this date.

18.2 Enrollment Requirements for Funding

Pre-K providers are expected to maintain the class enrollment levels specified in their grant agreement. Enrollment below 22 students will reduce payments.

18.3 Payments

Operating funds will automatically be deposited in accounts in 10 monthly payments beginning in August 2016.

- Georgia’s Pre-K payments will be processed by the 12th of each month or the next business day. The deposit will occur within 3 to 7 business days from the processed date in PANDA. Payments may be delayed if the Georgia Pre-K Grant Agreement has not been executed, class roster information has not been successfully submitted, or if the class, site or program’s payment has been placed on hold.
- All payments are subject to state data processing and bank processing delays.
- The final Pre-K payment for the year will be the May 2017 payment.
- If teacher salary is prorated over 12 months, programs may pay personnel summer salaries from 2016-2017 school year funds.
- Providers who incur summer salary personnel expenses for teaching staff for the 2016-2017 school year should have written policies in place for payment of staff from funds other than Pre-K funds.
- Pre-K providers who maintain constant enrollments and uninterrupted teacher credentials will receive the equivalent of 10 equal payments for the school year. If these requirements are not met, individual payments will be adjusted accordingly.

18.4 Schedule of Payments

Ten (10) Payments	Level of Teacher Credentials and Number of Children	Ten (10) Months
Payment Processed on or Before	Based On	For the Month of
August 12, 2016	Grant Agreement	August
September 12, 2016	Grant Agreement	September
October 12, 2016	Roster 1	October
November 14, 2016	Roster 1	November
December 12, 2016	Roster 2	December
January 12, 2017	Roster 2	January
February 13, 2017	Roster 3	February
March 13, 2017	Roster 3	March
April 12, 2017	Roster 4 (Final)	April
May 12, 2017	Roster 4 (Final)	May

18.5 Calculation of Payments

Payment calculations (except for lead teacher supplemental pay) are based on student enrollment and the lead teacher credentials for each class as reported on the submitted roster.

- The August 2016 and September 2016 payments will be based on the executed grant agreement.
- If the enrollment and the lead teacher credential reported on each of the required rosters remains consistent with the approved grant agreement, no funding adjustment will be made.
- Roster data is critical to the payment calculation. As students leave the class or new students are added, current and prior payments will recalculate the total number of eligible children served each month using a half-month convention to retroactively recover overpayments or pay additional amounts for each class. Recording accurate begin dates and end dates for students and teachers on each roster is required to ensure accurate payment calculations.
- Lead teacher credentials and the number of enrolled children will be monitored. Lead teacher credentials must be verified in the Georgia Professional Development System (GaPDS.) If the credential cannot be verified; differs from the credential specified in the grant agreement; or differs from the credential reported on the roster, payments will be adjusted to the credential level that can be verified. Payments will be retroactively adjusted for changes in teacher credentials.
- Attendance and enrollment records are subject to review and audit upon request. Students found to be enrolled for the same period of time in more than one class will require proof of enrollment and attendance. Payments will be retroactively adjusted for changes in student enrollment.

No additional corrections, adjustments or payment processing will be made after May 12, 2017 or within five business days after receipt of the final scheduled payment from Bright from the Start in accordance with the grant agreement (whichever occurs first).

Payment Disputes

If the provider's payment does not reflect the number of students on the submitted roster and/or the verified lead teacher credential that was entered, the provider may submit a payment dispute. Payment disputes must be submitted by May 12, 2017.

18.6 Rosters

Beginning in the 2016-2017 school year, there is a change in the roster process for reporting teacher information. Roster data is critical and must be accurate for teachers' and students' information. Roster information is subject to audit and must be substantiated by documentation of credentials and creditable years of experience for teachers; and enrollment and attendance records for students. Programs will use the Teacher Information Screen in PANDA to enter and update lead and assistant teacher information during the school year. Students' information will be reported on four roster reports during the school year.

Lead Teacher and Assistant Teacher Data

Beginning in the 2016 -2017 school year, all providers are required to enter lead and assistant teacher information prior to the start of the school year. Providers will enter lead and assistant data in the PANDA roster system. The Teacher Information Screen is scheduled to be accessible for data entry on July 15, 2016 for programs to add teachers, delete teachers, and/or update current teacher information. A PANDA email will be sent to all providers notifying them when the roster system is accessible. Data entry between July 15, 2016 and August 1, 2016 will be used to calculate supplemental compensation for the August payment. Therefore, it is critical that lead teacher information be accurate.

Because payment calculations are based, in part, on the verified lead teacher credentials, it is important that

providers update lead teacher changes in the Teacher Information Screen in a timely manner. Once a payment is made, only DECAL can make changes to prior month's teacher information. A change in teacher information will be accepted for one past month only. For example, if a teacher is issued a Professional Standards Commission certification in October, but the change is not made until February, the new certified credential will only be retro paid for January. To ensure correct payments, it is important that the Teacher Information Screen be maintained as current as possible.

Student Data

The first roster should include the names and information for children who attended Pre-K since the beginning of the school year. All changes up until the count date should be reflected on the first roster.

Children who have enrolled or registered for Pre-K but have not attended a scheduled Pre-K instruction day should not be reported on the first roster. (Exception: If the class instruction begins after the first roster is due, the Pre-K provider will need to report "registered" students beginning as of the count date.)

Subsequent student rosters should include any changes made from the previous roster count date. Dates must be accurate for beginning and ending points for children and teachers so that a reduction in payment does not occur. Inadvertently reporting inaccurate roster data will increase the probability that payments are reduced. Student rosters and attendance documentation (kept in the classroom) must match. **Programs will be charged \$75 for each roster submitted with a child listed who is not actively enrolled and present in the classroom within the 10 school days period prior to the count date.** The exception would be children on extended medical or other approved leave. Appropriate leave documentation should be maintained on site.

Charges for inadvertently reporting inaccurate roster data will be deducted from the next Pre-K payment. Continued instances of such reporting will result in a graduated increase of \$25 per roster error. For example, if a program reports two children with the wrong start date on a roster, there will be a charge of \$150 (\$75 per child); if the same program reports three children with the wrong end date on the next roster, there will be a charge of \$300 (\$75 per child plus an additional \$25 per child); if the same program reports inaccurate information for the lead teacher on the next roster, there will be a \$125 charge (\$75 plus an additional \$50). Inaccurate reporting may result in probation or termination of the grant agreement.

Adjustments in roster data will be made for the current roster period only.

Duplicate children are children who appear on more than one roster for the same reporting period. Since only one provider can be paid for the child, the provider who presents evidence that the child was in attendance at the time shall receive payment while the other provider will have their payment reduced. To reduce the number of "duplicate children," Bright from the Start recommends that providers contact the family of a child absent for three consecutive days to find out the reason for the absence. Contacting the parent can reduce the number of children kept on the attendance rolls of one program when they might be attending another program.

The Pre-K provider is responsible for replacing any child who leaves as soon as possible, to prevent their payment from being reduced. Children who have been absent for 10 consecutive days without a reasonable excuse must be removed from the roster, but this does not mean that a child should be kept on the roster for 10 days after their last day of attendance. The end date is the last day the child physically attended the program.

Roster based payments shall not be made until the required roster information is submitted.

Roster	Roster Open for Data Entry	Count Day	Due to Bright from the Start
1 st	August 1, 2016	September 9, 2016	September 16, 2016
2 nd	October 6, 2016	November 4, 2016	November 14, 2016
3 rd	December 6, 2016	January 6, 2017	January 13, 2017
4 th	February 6, 2017	March 15, 2017	March 17, 2017

Failure to submit rosters by the due date will result in delayed payments. Rosters submitted after the due date may result in payments being processed by Bright from the Start after all other payments have been made

18.7 Fraudulent Reporting on Rosters

Any person who knowingly and willfully makes a false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or representation in a statement to a government agency may be guilty of a felony of a violation of Code Section 16-10-20 of the Official Code of Georgia. Any person, firm, corporation, or other legal entity that 1) knowingly presents or causes to be presented a false or fraudulent claim for payment or approval or 2) knowingly makes, uses, or causes to be made or used a false record or statement material to a false or fraudulent claim, shall be liable for civil penalties. The civil penalty can range from \$5,500 to \$11,000 for each false or fraudulent claim, plus three times the amount of damages sustained by the government because of such act pursuant to Code Section 23-3-121 of the Official Code of Georgia.

19.0 Funding Information

19.1 Program Summary Chart

Based on the **State Fiscal (Financial) Year 2017*** budget approved by the Georgia General Assembly, the following rates will be in effect for the 2016-2017 school year.

Note: The Operating category includes the following percentages for benefits:

- 23.760% for Lead and Assistant Teachers with a Two Year Degree or Four Year Degree in Private Metro, Private Non-Metro and Public School programs.
- 34.254% for Public School Lead Teachers with T4 or T5 certification.

2016-2017 Georgia's Pre-K Annual Rates for 1 Class of 22 Students

Credential	Private Metro Area		Private Non-Metro Area		Public School	
Two Year Degree	Salary Lead	\$ 21,029.27	Salary Lead	\$ 21,029.27	Salary Lead	\$ 21,029.27
	Salary Asst.	\$ 15,561.66	Salary Asst.	\$ 15,561.66	Salary Asst.	\$ 15,561.66
	Operating	\$ 32,875.12	Operating	\$ 26,282.82	Operating	\$ 23,163.88
	Total	\$ 69,466.05	Total	\$ 62,873.75	Total	\$ 59,754.81
Credential	Private Metro Area		Private Non-Metro Area		Public School	
Four Year Degree	Salary Lead	\$ 26,780.00	Salary Lead	\$ 26,780.00	Salary Lead	\$ 26,780.00
	Salary Asst.	\$ 15,561.66	Salary Asst.	\$ 15,561.66	Salary Asst.	\$ 15,561.66
	Operating	\$ 34,241.50	Operating	\$ 27,649.20	Operating	\$ 24,530.26
	Total	\$ 76,583.16	Total	\$ 69,990.86	Total	\$ 66,871.92
Credential	Private Metro Area		Private Non-Metro Area		Public School	
Certified (T4)	Salary Lead	\$ 35,118.35	Salary Lead	\$ 35,118.35	Salary Lead	\$ 35,118.36
	Salary Asst.	\$ 15,561.66	Salary Asst.	\$ 15,561.66	Salary Asst.	\$ 15,561.66
	Operating	\$ 36,222.69	Operating	\$ 29,630.39	Operating	\$ 30,196.77
	Total	\$ 86,902.70	Total	\$ 80,310.40	Total	\$ 80,876.79
Credential	Private Metro Area		Private Non-Metro Area		Public School	
Certified (T5)*	Salary Lead	\$ 39,552.00	Salary Lead	\$ 39,552.00	Salary Lead	\$ 39,552.00
	Salary Asst.	\$ 15,561.66	Salary Asst.	\$ 15,561.66	Salary Asst.	\$ 15,561.66
	Operating	\$ 37,276.13	Operating	\$ 30,683.83	Operating	\$ 31,715.47
	Total	\$ 92,389.79	Total	\$ 85,797.49	Total	\$ 86,829.13

The rates do not include any form of supplemental pay for lead teachers, start-up funds, sparsity allowances, or transportation funds.

Metro Areas = Camden, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Hall, Henry, Paulding, and Rockdale Counties

Non-Metro Areas = All other counties not listed as Metro or are located out of state.

Public Schools = All County, City, or Charter Schools

* For school year 2016-2017, three additional rates have been added for Lead Teachers with a Masters Degree level certification.

Transportation services for Category One children are not mandatory. Transportation will be paid monthly based on submitted roster data at a rate of \$16.50 for each eligible child.

20.0 Audit and Accounting Requirements

20.1 Reconciliation Report

Pre-K providers must provide Bright from the Start with a reconciliation report spanning the dates of the grant agreement. The purpose of the reconciliation report is to provide an actual accounting of all of the providers expenditures related to Pre-K. This report shall demonstrate that funds were spent in appropriate categories for their intended uses. Supporting documentation must be maintained and provided upon request from Bright from the Start (See Section 17.1 and 17.7.) Closeout procedures and forms regarding the 2016-2017 year-end reconciliation process will be forwarded to Pre-K providers during July 2017.

Funds paid by Bright from the Start for Pre-K services can be used to cover costs of the Pre-K program only and the Pre-K program's prorated share of other allowable costs expensed through normal operation of the facility. Allowable costs are those ordinary and necessary expenses directly benefiting or resulting from Pre-K program operations.

Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) provides authoritative guidance that must be followed for identifying the appropriate basis for allocating shared costs. The basis of allocating costs should be similar to the unit of measure for incurring the costs or consuming the expensed item. Examples include using a square footage basis for rent/mortgage expenses and utilities, and a per person or average daily attendance basis is appropriate for office supplies, management staff, and transportation services if provided. Expenses must be allocated using the most logical basis for the costs incurred. For example, food costs would be allocated based on the number of children rather than square footage.

Expenses involving related parties must also be charged in accordance with GAAP. Related parties are one or more entities subject to the significant influence over the operating and financial policies of another entity. Providers involved in related party transactions with their centers should survey the surrounding business area and provide support that financial charges to the Pre-K program are within the range of same or similar arms-length transactions for their area.

Private providers must submit this reconciliation report by August 30, 2017 for the 2016-2017 school year. Local school systems must submit this reconciliation report by September 30, 2017 for the 2016-2017 school year. Providers must submit reconciliation reports electronically via PANDA (**See Appendix N for the *Pre-K Year End Reconciliation Report*.**)

If a provider does not complete and submit the reconciliation report, Pre-K payments for the 2016-2017 school year will be held until the reconciliation report is received. Failure to submit the report may result in grant termination.

20.2 Private Nonprofit (PNP) Audits

PNP Pre-K providers must adhere to audit requirements as specified in O.C.G.A. § 50-20-1 et seq., Relations with Nonprofit Contractors.

Before Bright from the Start enters into a grant agreement with a nonprofit contractor, the contractor must furnish Bright from the Start with certified financial statements showing the nonprofit contractor's financial condition at the end of the previous fiscal year and revenues and expenditures for the previous fiscal year. When the nonprofit contractor has existed for less than a full year, the financial statements must cover year

to date operations for the current year. The financial statements must include an individual list of each employee and his salary and reimbursable expenses; a list by category of the sources of income of the nonprofit contractor; and a list of the source(s) of all public funds received by the nonprofit contractor and the program for which the funds were received.

20.3 Right to Audit/ Agreed Upon Procedures Review

Bright from the Start reserves the right to require an independent, certified financial audit of the Pre-K program at the Pre-K provider's expense. Bright from the Start reserves the right to conduct Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP) reviews.

Bright from the Start may conduct audits and AUP reviews as specified in the Georgia's Pre-K Program Grant Agreement for the 2016-2017 school year, Section III, Part C:

Grantee agrees to cooperate fully with Grantor auditors and/or agents providing Audit or Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP) review services. Grantee will coordinate with auditors/reviewers to have appropriate staff available during the scheduled audit/review period. Grantee will make advanced preparations for scheduled audits/reviews to make available for auditors or reviewers all identified documents, records, and entity related materials requested by the auditors/reviewers for the current school year, as well as for prior school years in which Grantee participated in Georgia's Pre-K Program as requested by the Grantor. Grantee's failure to substantially prepare for a scheduled audit engagement or provide requested documentation or information to an auditor/reviewer during the scheduled audit period may result in the withholding of grant payments. The failure of Grantor to review and/or inspect the services provided or to discover a breach of this Grant or any amendment thereto shall not subsequently operate as a waiver of any remedies available to the Grantor.

If in the course of an audit or AUP review there are negative findings, the provider may be scheduled for an audit for the subsequent school year at the discretion of Bright from the Start.

20.4 Record Keeping Findings and Adverse Findings

Findings noted during the course of the AUP review that do not result in a balance of funds due back to Bright from the Start are considered Record Keeping Findings. Examples include:

- Understatements of reported expenses compared to the reconciliation report.
- Overstatements of reported expenses compared to the reconciliation report.
- Variances between the expenditures reported on the Pre K reconciliation and the allocable Pre-K expenditures supported during fieldwork.

Findings noted during the course of the AUP review that result in a balance of funds due back to Bright from the Start are considered Adverse Findings. Examples include:

- Failing to support unreimbursed food costs
- Failing to meet Lead Teacher salary requirements
- Failing to meet the Instructional Supplies and Materials requirements
- Failing to support that payroll taxes were forwarded to the relevant taxing authorities
- Failing to support all expenditures of Special allotment funding
- Failing to support that the use of all monies received from Bright from the Start were used in accordance with applicable regulations and guidelines.

20.5 Balances Due to Bright from the Start

If a Pre-K program is unable to support its expenditures with receipts and other records as a result of

having its financial records reviewed (AUP, audit, investigation), funds may be required to be returned to Bright from the Start. There are three options regarding these outstanding funds:

- Remit the balance in full by the deadline date
- Submit a payment plan proposal with a 10 percent good faith payment by the deadline date
- Submit all source documentation by the deadline date, disputing the results of the AUP review findings.

20.6 Audit Reconsideration

In order for an AUP review to be re-considered, please submit a formal request. The request:

- Must be written
- Must be made within 15 days of the notice of balance due letter from Bright from the Start
- Must include a detailed audit trail including all source documents necessary for Bright from the Start to make a final decision in a timely manner

20.7 Random Reviews

The Pre-K provider is subject to random, unannounced expenditure reviews by Bright from the Start or Bright from the Start contract auditors during the program year. All records (programmatic and financial) must be retained for a minimum of three years as stated in the grant agreement.

20.8 Multi-County Pre-K Provider Budgets

Multi-county Pre-K providers must maintain at least a minimum of one Pre-K program budget per county for Bright from the Start reporting needs.

20.9 Tracking of Pre-K Funds

The Pre-K provider must maintain financial records to track Pre-K expenditures in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). All records must be retained for a minimum of three years as stated in the grant agreement.

The Pre-K provider is required to keep all receipts and other records necessary to support figures reported on the annual/mid-year reconciliation statement. If a Pre-K program is audited and receipts and other records are not available to support these amounts, funds must be returned to Bright from the Start. Examples of such records include federal and state payroll records to verify payment of lead teacher and teacher assistant salaries, original receipts for equipment, supplies, and materials for Pre-K classrooms, and documentation of the Pre-K portion of operating expenses.

20.10 Lost, Stolen, or Destroyed Records

In the event of natural or man-made disasters, i.e. flooding, fire, hurricane, tornado, theft, etc., the Pre-K provider is responsible for providing third party verification to substantiate the disaster. Verification includes police reports, insurance company claims, photos, or other proof that support the disaster and must also include detail of the property impacted. Claims related to man-made disasters must be made and filed within 30 calendar days of the incident. Claims related to natural disasters must be filed as soon as possible in accordance with insurance company regulations.

20.11 Fraudulent/ Inappropriate Use of Funds

The Pre-K provider shall ensure that expenses charged to the Pre-K funding source are not concurrently charged to another program funding source.

The Pre-K provider must ensure that no Pre-K funds are used to pay penalties associated with adverse actions imposed by licensing or governmental agencies. Pre-K expenditures should be identifiable as separate from federal expenditures (e.g., Head Start, CACFP).

Misuse of funds may result in repayment of funds and denial of current and future participation in Georgia's Pre-K Program and/or in prosecution. Funds due back must be repaid within 12 months.

Providers with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) or the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), who are placed on the seriously deficient list and terminated from the food program because of fraudulent reporting and/or inappropriate use of funds, shall also be terminated from the Pre-K program. Providers who are terminated from the CAPS program because of fraudulent reporting and/or inappropriate use of funds shall also be terminated from the Pre-K program.

21.0 Other Considerations

21.1 Inappropriate Lead Teacher

Non-documented or insufficient information on lead teacher credentials, beginning with the first roster, may result in probation and may jeopardize current or future participation in the Pre-K program. (See Section 10.1)

21.2 Inappropriate Staff/Child Ratios

Non-documented or insufficient information on staff/child ratios may result in probation and may jeopardize current or future participation in the Pre-K program. (See Section 10.1)

21.3 Ineligible Birthdates and Lack of Birth Documentation

Proof-of-age eligibility must be on file the day the child begins the Pre-K program. Failure to remove or correct ineligible Pre-K student birthdates by the first roster (See Section 18.6 for first roster due date) may result in the site being placed on probation with possible termination. Providers will not be paid for children listed with ineligible birthdates or for children without birth documentation. (See Section 10.1)

21.4 Noncompliance

Serious or repeated instances involving noncompliance with program requirements (Pre-K, Child Care, Nutrition Services, Audit, or CAPS program) will result in probation or termination of the Pre-K grant agreement during the program year. All grant agreements for future services will be held pending resolution of outstanding issues. (See Section 10.1).

21.5 Request to Move a Pre-K Class

Georgia's Pre-K classes can be moved only to sites under the same ownership and only with approval from Bright from the Start. To request permission to move a class, the Pre-K provider must complete the **Request to Move a Pre-K Class Form (Appendix O)** and submit the form to their Pre-K Consultant. Programs must receive written approval before moving a class. Moving a class without prior permission may result in probation and/or loss of funding.

21.6 Requests for a Georgia's Pre-K Program Change of Ownership

Georgia's Pre-K Program is generally non-transferable. When a center is sold after entering into a Georgia's Pre-K grant agreement with Bright from the Start, change of ownership requirements must be met as determined by Bright from the Start before a determination can be made as to the transferring of the Pre-K

program to the new owner. Entities applying for transfer of classes must be agents who are eligible to receive Pre-K funds.

A request to continue services does not guarantee continuation of funding for the new owner. Funding decisions are at the discretion of Bright from the Start. Therefore, entities requesting a change of ownership should not base business decisions on the assumption that Georgia's Pre-K will automatically approve the continuation of Pre-K classes once a request is processed. The Pre-K Division will notify the new owner of the continuation status of the Pre-K classes after the Child Care Services Division issues a valid license.

Pre-K payments are placed on hold during the change of ownership process. If the transfer of the Pre-K program is approved, the payment will be released, and the new owner may continue delivery of Pre-K services. It is understood that all equipment, supplies, and materials purchased for the Pre-K program remain with the program. It is also understood that the new owner accepts the conditions of the Pre-K grant agreement for the current school year. Additionally, if a program is not in good standing when the class(es) is transferred, the probation status is applied to the new owner. The seller is responsible for notifying the new owner of the probationary status.

Entities requesting a change of ownership must submit all information and documentation required by both the Pre-K Division and the Applicant Services Unit of the Child Care Services Division. The Pre-K Change of Ownership Request Application is available at <http://www.decal.ga.gov/Prek/OwnershipChangeRequest.aspx>.

21.7 Class Closures

Providers that are choosing to close and not operate one or more of their Georgia Pre-K classrooms at a site must complete the **Class Closure Notification Form (Appendix L)** and submit it to their Pre-K Consultant. The form must be completed and submitted by the Pre-K Project Director.

22.0 Reporting Requirements

22.1 Pre-K Application and Database Access (PANDA) Participation

Pre-K providers are required to use the PANDA system to conduct Pre-K related activities (rosters, application, waiting lists). Regular access to the internet and an e-mail address are required to use PANDA. Using PANDA allows providers to receive regular Pre-K payments as quickly as possible and reduces duplication of provider efforts related to child roster data.

22.2 2016-2017 School Year Critical Reporting Dates

Listed below are the critical reporting dates for submission of information to Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

8/1/2016	Roster 1 Open
9/9/2016	Roster 1 Count Date
9/16/2016	Roster 1 Due Date – The Pre-K provider shall complete and submit to the Department a completed class roster including name of lead teacher.
9/16/2016	Waiting List Due Date – The Pre-K provider shall complete, in PANDA, waiting list information entry.
10/6/2016	Roster 2 Open
11/4/2016	Roster 2 Count Date

11/14/2016	Roster 2 Due Date – The Pre-K provider shall complete and submit to the Department an updated roster with changes made for students and teachers, as applicable.
11/14/2016	Waiting List Due Date – The Pre-K provider shall update, in PANDA, waiting list information entry.
12/6/2016	Roster 3 Open
1/6/2017	Roster 3 Count Date
1/13/2017	Roster 3 Due Date – The Pre-K provider shall complete and send to the Department an updated roster with changes made for students and teachers, as applicable.
1/13/2017	Waiting List Due Date – The Pre-K provider shall update, in PANDA, waiting list information entry.
2/6/2017	Roster 4 Open
3/15/2017	Roster 4 Count Date
3/17/2017	Roster 4 Due Date – The Pre-K provider shall complete and send to the Department an updated roster with changes made for students and teachers, as applicable. Submission of the last roster (#4) in March will be the final class data to be used in calculation of the remaining two payments other than the elimination of duplicate students as applicable.
3/17/2017	Waiting List Due Date – The Pre-K provider shall update, on PANDA, waiting list Information
4/14/2017	Requests for children to repeat Pre-K deadline – All requests to repeat Pre-K including supporting documentation must be received. Requests submitted after the deadline will not be considered.
4/14/2017	Funding approval deadline – The deadline to submit for approval of playground and technology purchases by Pre-K Consultant.
5/12/2017	Last day to dispute any payment for the school year. Supporting documentation must be faxed to 404-651-8576 or scanned to panda.finance@dec.al.ga.gov . After May 10, 2016, all Pre-K payments will be final. Any disputed payments should be reported prior to May 8th with final resolution by May 31, 2016.
8/30/2017	Private provider 2016-2017 reconciliation reports are due to the Department.
9/29/2017	Public school 2016-2017 reconciliation reports are due to the Department.

Rosters must include staff date of hire along with date of enrollment and birth dates for children. Rosters must be completed and properly submitted through the PANDA online system to receive payments. Additional information will be required on enrolled children including gender, race/ethnicity, English language proficiency, and special education services. It is the responsibility of Pre-K providers to review electronic payment advice information in PANDA and alert Bright from the Start of any questionable discrepancy in the payment amount on or before May 12, 2017. Corrections and/or changes to the submitted roster not reported in a timely manner on submitted rosters could result in non-payment of the adjusted amount.

Bright from the Start may request surveys and other information including student documentation during the program year. Pre-K providers should return any requested information according to the formats and time lines indicated by Bright from the Start.

23.0 Community Involvement

23.1 Participation

The existence of local coordinating councils is optional for each county. Providers are encouraged to participate in local collaborative partnerships at the local or county level to better serve children and prevent duplication of services.

23.2 Activities

For counties where local collaborative partnerships exist, the following activities are suggested:

- Update and distribute lists of local community resources to all Pre-K sites in the county
- Collaborate to provide services for children and families in need
- Develop procedures for referring children with disabilities
- Identify providers willing to donate medical services
- Provide forums for parents to share ideas and concerns
- Provide forums for discussing and solving local concerns/problems of providers and teachers
- Create and distribute a list of substitute teachers/teacher assistants who could be utilized by all providers
- Provide forums for sharing instructional practices
- Develop a process to share non-confidential wait list information
- Collaborate on recruiting children to ensure that all Pre-K slots are filled
- Provide forums for compiling and submitting suggestions to Bright from the Start

23.3 Policy Development

Local collaborative partnerships that want to establish policy guidelines for providers in their communities must obtain **prior approval** from Bright from the Start before beginning this effort.

24.0 Blended Head Start / Pre-K Classrooms

24.1 Definition

A blended classroom is defined as a class that has funding which is braided using both Georgia's Pre-K and Head Start dollars. Pre-K funding is used for the 6.5 hours of instruction and Head Start funding is used for the wrap-around support services.

24.2 Classroom Delivery

Blended Head Start Pre-K classrooms will operate with a maximum of 20 children enrolled, per Head Start guidelines. Full funding for Blended Head Start Pre-K classes is based on a class of 20; however, Pre-K payments are calculated using the per child funding amount. Classes with fewer than 18 children enrolled will be considered as "Low Roster" classes and may be subject to closure.

24.3 Attendance Requirements

Head Start policies regarding student attendance shall be followed in blended classrooms with respect to disenrollment of students due to chronic absenteeism or tardiness and late pick-ups. Providers must document efforts to contact parents and develop strategies to assist families in resolving attendance issues (contact log, conference notes, etc.).

24.4 Teaching Staff

Lead Teacher

All lead teachers must meet Georgia's Pre-K requirements for credentials and training (See Section 12.3), as well as Head Start requirements for credentials.

Assistant Teacher

All assistant teachers must meet Georgia's Pre-K requirements for credentials and training (See Section 13.3), as well as Head Start requirements for credentials.

24.5 Assessment

Blended programs must implement *Work Sampling Online (WSO)*. All components must be completed, as well as Head Start performance standards must be met. Head Start may have additional health screenings and standardized assessments.

24.6 Parent Conferences/Home Visits

Georgia's Pre-K guidelines require two family conferences. Georgia's Pre-K Child Assessment information must be reviewed with parents/ guardians in at least two of the visits/conferences. Programs may use a home visit to share assessment information with parent(s). Head Start requirements may require additional parent involvement activities.

24.7 Materials, Equipment and Classroom

Blended classrooms must maintain adequate and appropriate equipment, materials, and supplies for each Pre-K classroom. All items must be in good repair. Refer to the ***Georgia's Pre-K Program Basic Equipment, Materials, and Supplies Inventory List*** for recommendations.